

The Indo-European (IE) Linguistic Spread and the ‘Homeland Problem’ Revisited

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Received: March 27, 2023

Accepted: May 11, 2023

Available online: June 20, 2023

doi:10.11114/ijsss.v11i4.6177

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v11i4.6177>

Abstract

The nineteenth and early twentieth-century intellectual claim to European ancestry stems from the ‘Aryan Myth’—the linguistic equating of Iranians as direct descendants of Aryans, or Indo-Europeans. The historical genesis of the word ‘Aryan’ was influenced by The First Persian Empire (550-330 B.C.E.) in reference to an Iranian homeland, and by nineteenth-century Western linguists’ associations with the ancestral Indo-Europeans (IE).¹ Notable philologists examining the ‘homeland problem’ have shown a standard concern towards the accuracy of scholarship on Indo-European origins. Ara (2008) decodes Indo-European origins and spread that gradually led to affiliations between Indo-Iranians and the ‘Aryan’ label. The onomastics approach would suggest that the proto-language left identifiable clues in the landscape itself (Mallory & Adams, 2006, p. 447). Dyen’s (1956) linguistic migration and homeland theory cites a European homeland accepted since the nineteen hundreds. Nichols’ (1997) analysis of the Indo-European migrations from 4,000 to 3,500 B.C.E. points to a locus of language dispersal within western central Asia (p. 134). Mallory (1989) and Kuzmina (1994a) favor a Proto-Indo-European homeland in the Pontic-Caspian steppe region from the fifth to fourth millennium B.C.E.² (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142). The accurate whereabouts of the Indo-European and daughter Indo-Iranian language group have been reviewed from various fields and by abundant methodologies, including the eschatological, anthropological, linguistic, and archaeological—all adding to the convoluted nature of scholarship on the Aryan question. The academic search for an Iranian homeland raises the inquiry of how ethnicity and region become tantamount to politicized and prejudiced topics on the account of misappropriations of a linguistic concept. An archaeological and lexicostatistic excavation of the conservative nature to review the genesis of Aryan homeland origins may help diverge from the aggrandized ethnological, ethnographic, and anthropometric evidence that has ramified an essentialist nomenclature of the Indo-Iranians in the eighteen and nineteen hundreds.

Keywords: Proto-Indo-European, Indo-European, Proto-Indo-Iranian, Indo-Iranian, Aryan, Iranian, migration, homeland problem

1. Introduction

The ancestral Indo-Iranian subgroup of the Indo-Europeans originates from migrations around 4,000 to 3,500 B.C.E. Previous Proto-Indo-Europeans³ (PIE) of 6,000 years ago were ancestral to Germanic, Slavic, Roman, Catholic, Greek, and Armenian subgroups known from archeology found in southern Siberia. Archaeologist Colin Renfrew (1987) posits that Anatolia was the home of the Proto-Indo-Europeans (PIE) from 7,000 to 6,500 B.C.E. (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142). From whichever place the Proto-Indo-European homeland was in, and whatever timing the language dispersal occurred, what remains is a consensus that the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) group diverged into two major families (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142). One language family split west to Europe and came to be known as the Indo-European speakers—counting all modern European languages, and excluding Hungarian, Finnish, and Basque (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142). The other language group traveled eastward to Eurasia and came to be known as the Indo-Iranians (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142). According to Lamberg-Karlovsky (2004), the Indo-Iranians remained a faction speaking a shared language before diverging into Indo-Aryan and Iranian dialects. The Iranian family represents the languages of Pakistan (Baluch), Afghanistan (Pashto), Tadjikistan (Tadjik), Iran (Iranian), Indo-Aryan (Hindi), along with its many kindred languages (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142). Ara (2008) examines the unique bond between Indo-Iranian traditions and their ancient lineal cultures—Old-European and Indo-European. The procedure follows a usual approach, analyzing universal patterns and a particular methodology for identifying what makes the Vedic

and Avestan occurrences unique (Ara, 2008, p. 3). Ara's (2008) framework outlines archaeological and historical backgrounds of similar earlier traditions while respecting the Indo-Iranians' overarching worldviews. When deducing the Indo-European similarities with their daughter Indo-Iranian group, Ara (2008) uncovers commonalities and established connections, with similar belief systems based in the Indo-Iranian rituals and their subbranches—Indian and Iranian (Ara, 2008, p. 3). The method follows an encyclopedic approach to consider all variables of a singular subject, with the eschatological examination of the Indo-Iranian traditions in the brief sense. Religion, archaeology, and the examination of historical testimonies are employed without ending at a singular timepoint. The cognizance of Indo-European vernacular and culture is a prerequisite to the investigation of Indo-Iranians, and remains concurrently vital to the analysis and recognition of the culture of Old Europe—the homeland of the Indo-Europeans (Ara, 2008, p. 3). Likewise, the study of the Indo-Europeans and their ancestors—the Old European migrants, remains imperative (Ara, 2008, p. 3). In the third millennium B.C.E., varied people emerged from the Proto-Indo-Europeans, who reigned someplace in the southern Russian steppes during the fourth millennium B.C.E. (Ara, 2008, p. 7). The spread of the Proto-Indo-European language was accompanied by innovative agriculture (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142). Sprouting from the Proto-Indo-European descendants were diverse groups speaking distinct languages, while still claiming similarities. Within centuries, the people traveled distant paths from their earliest native land, expanding their multiple language groups from Europe to the Indus Valley. Proto-Indo-Iranians (PIIr) and their subbranches—the Aryans in Iran and India, were a singular group of this extensive language family (Ara, 2008, p. 7).

1.1 The Genesis of Proto-Indo-Iranians and Aryans

The Indo-Iranians were a primary group of the Indo-European family emerging with other early societies of Asia—like the Anatolians⁴ (Ara, 2008, p. 55). Indo-Iranians held a linguistic and cultural connection to the expansive Indo-European family. Linguists studied the resemblance between Aryans—including Indians and Iranians, both in a general lexicon and grammar sense, and in culture (Ara, 2008, p. 55). A shared social environment, culture, and geography was evident in names for rivers and mountains, with the two languages' rituals drawing from a common ancestry (Ara, 2008, p. 55). The physical world of the Indo-Iranians merged with their cultural heritage and helped unravel similarities in languages. The interconnected rituals of the Indians and Iranians confirmed the era of Aryan (Indo-Iranian) unification (Ara, 2008, p. 56). The Aryan environment draws to remote times when the Iranian and Indian ancestors formed one unit called Proto-Indo-Iranians, who served as a branch of Indo-Europeans residing in pastoral regions of the South Russian Steppes, eastward of Volga in the third millennium B.C.E. (Ara, 2008, p. 56). Starting in this period, Proto-Indo-Iranians diverged, as evident in speech. With respect to an all-inclusive religio-cultural analysis, Indo-Iranians were one of the first branches of the Indo-Europeans⁵ residing as a unified people in one area, speaking one tongue, and sharing comparable faiths and customs. They split into assorted communities, and segregated themselves in separate countries, residing in regions apart from Iran and India. In due course, the diverse Indo-Iranian populations spoke distinct languages and picked up different traditions (Ara, 2008, p. 56). The Indians and Iranians changed their initially shared religions over millennia as per historical and ecological happenings (Ara, 2008, p. 56). When reviewing the cruxes of their religious character and views, a kaleidoscope of resemblances are apparent, with identity in the ancient populations diverging from the same Aryan parental root (Ara, 2008, p. 56). The home of the Indo-Iranians was unquestionably the steppes of present Central Asia, above the Caspian and Aral waters (Ara, 2008, p. 56). According to historical linguists' accounts, the Indo-Iranians began separation around 2,500 B.C.E. into two separate language groups—Iranian and Indo-Aryan (Ara, 2008, p. 57). There is no agreement as to the precise time in which they resided as a defined group, however, the proposed dates according to archeological evidence range from 3,500 to 2,000 B.C.E.

1.1.1 Indo-Iranian Origins and Spread

There is dispute with respect to the precise migration routes of the Indo-Iranians to an exact amount as there is regarding the Indo-European homeland (Ara, 2008, p. 57). From Harmatta's understanding, the historical linguistic scheme rooted in Proto-Indo-Iranian and Proto-Iranian adopted words—like the horse or chariot, summarizes that tribal contact between the Indo-Iranians and Caucasus arose around 4,000 B.C.E. Harmatta further implies that the Proto-Indo-Iranian migrations likely happened over the course of centuries in successive ternary stages, with distinguished features. The initial kind of migration was by small livestock-breeding groups; the second was by tribes and kinship groups including chariots and armies; and the third was by massive groups of horse-riding migrants with cattle (Harmatta, 1992, p. 368-369; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 57).

The most common archetype of the Indo-Iranian genesis identifies a direct lineage in the steppe of Ural/Kazakhstan dating back to 3,000 B.C.E.⁶ (Ara, 2008, p. 57). The earliest culture of the Indo-Iranians (Aryans) includes the Andronovo culture⁷ (c.a. 2,000-900 B.C.E.) (Ara, 2008, p. 57). Located later in the northern neighborhoods of Central Asia, Andronovo culture was first articulated in 1927 by Sergei Teploukhov, and globally associated with the Indo-Iranians by Russian archaeologists⁸ (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 146). The Andronovo culture—or Indo-Iranians as Kuzmina (1994a) identifies them, were made of pastoralists established mainly in Central Asia (Lamberg-Karlovsky,

2004, p. 146; Ara, 2008, p. 57). Amid the Andronovo societies were the Fedorov and Alakul, who were often given Indo-Iranian identification in the southern Urals (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 147). Kuzmina's (1994a) detailed methodology follows the general agreement between archaeologists researching on the steppes who agree Andronovo culture to be Indo-Iranian (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 145). Lamberg-Karlovsky (2004) theorizes the Andronovo culture to be a thousand years separated from all documented customs—leaving ethnohistorical and linguistic ascription especially insubstantial⁹ (p. 145). In addition, the notion of ethnicity is multifaceted and permeable to change, complicating the acceptance of a belief that Andronovo culture remained a static entity for a thousand years (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 145-146).

1.1.2 Indo-Iranian Cultural Traits and “Ethnic Indicators”

According to Ara (2008), the Indo-Iranian burial structures included remnants of chariots, horses, weapons, livestock, tools, and ornaments strongly connected with the Indo-Iranians (p. 57). Kuzmina's (1994a) “ethnic indicators” of Andronovo¹⁰ culture as Indo-Iranian was in the Bactrian camel, the absence of swine in diet, the notable purpose of chariots, the particular importance of horse breeding, the mechanics of engineering, a horse cult connected to burial contexts, unique pots with four sides, vertical tripartite vessels made by coiling, homes with high-gabled ceilings,¹¹ and burial rites of cremation (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 145). This Indo-Iranian connection was reinforced by their pastoralism and Kuzmina's (1994a) “ethnic indicators,” along with the issuance of Iranian place-names over their area of occupancy. The Andronovo archaeological proof is usually correlated with textual evidence on the Indo-Iranians, and further used to establish Indo-Iranian identification of the numerous steppe clans—such as the Iranian-speaking clans of Alans, Sarmatians, and Sakas who inhabited the region in the first millennium B.C.E.¹² (Ara, 2008, p. 58). The “Indo-Iranization” of the larger Iranian expanse and the Indian subcontinent was greatly dependent on a hypothesis that obligates Andronovo clans to have sprouted in Central Asia (Ara, 2008, p. 58).

The archaeological traits that decode the Aryan migration routes to Iran and India from Central Asia indicate assorted attributes such as burials and horse sacrifices spread by the Aryans. From the Andronovo archaeological remains, Kuzmina holds that the migrations of Aryans followed route to the south from the steppe in the seventeenth and sixteenth century B.C.E. (Ara, 2008, p. 58). She also hypothesizes that Aryan features, such as horse sacrifices, were common among Kazakhstan's Andronovo culture and later Aryans (Iranians), who stayed put in Central Asia after a collection of them parted to India. Ara (2008) addresses Kuzmina's approach of tying archeological data with linguistically reconstructed cultures to thicken our comprehension of the Indo-Iranian legacy during the timespan before written history (p. 58). With regards to the Indo-Iranian migration out of their land of origin, Kuzmina centers evidence on the spiritual culture of the Indo-Iranians, rather than the characteristics of their artifacts and the similarities that range between them (Kuzmina, 2002b; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 58).

Kuzmina (2002a) locates Indo-Iranian origins on the steppes of Eurasia based on the discovery of archaeological material (p. 303). This hypothesis was accepted by Ivanov and most “Indo-Iranianists” as she calls them, and rejected by Lamberg-Karlovsky (Kuzmina, 2002a, p. 303). When Ivanov changed his perspective to locate a western Iranian homeland for the Indo-Iranians, Kuzmina (2002a) found it imperative to reassess both explanations (Gamkrelidze & Ivanov, 1984; as cited in Kuzmina, 2002a, p. 303). She thus suggested reconstructing Indo-Iranian culture from information contained in the *Rg Veda*, *Brahmanas*, *Avesta*, *Atharvaveda*, and linguistic evidence,¹³ and comparing each facet of material culture with archaeological information from the steppes of Eurasia and the Near East (Kuzmina, 2002a, p. 303). The economy of the Indo-Iranians was defined as semi-nomadic livestock breeding, with Bactrian camels and horses, and minimal farming. Their lifestyles consisted of the patriarchal extended familial kind, in light proto-yurts, or in logged houses with two-sloped roofs inspired by that of Central Europe (Kuzmina, 2002a, p. 303). Kuzmina's (2002a) Indo-Iranian hypothesis included features like large four-wheeled vehicles, war chariots, and light two-wheeled vehicles, with no prototypes or analogues existing anywhere in the Near East or India—only in the Eurasian steppe culture, where they flourished since the Copper Age (Kuzmina, 2002a, p. 303). She rejects a western Iranian and Bactria Margiana theory due to the Indo-Iranians' funeral ritual, including combined cremation and inhumation, a quality of the steppes. She further substantiates her Indo-Iranian origin theory with archaeological discoveries of the chariot and horse worship, by the Indo-Iranian place-names of the steppes, and in the southbound migrations of the steppe populations (Kuzmina, 1994b; Kuzmina, 2000; as cited in Kuzmina, 2002a, p. 303).

According to Ara (2008), the archaeological unveilings of sanctuaries, inhumations, and temples branded with symbols and images further affirm the culture of the Indo-Iranians (p. 58). One Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) site (ca. 2,100-1,750 B.C.E.) presents a grand archeological structure of a walled city, revealing the historical and cultural artifacts of the period (Erdosy, 1995, p. 155; Ara, 2008, p. 59). The BMAC site was associated with Indo-Iranians and proves a southbound migration towards the Indian subcontinent from Central Asia (Ara, 2008, p. 59). With evidence of Aryan weaponry, mining, agriculture, seafaring, pottery, carpentry, and architectural construction, it was clear the Aryans migrated to new regions and spread practices along with beliefs (Ara, 2008, p. 59). While encompass-

ing a vaster migration of the Indo-Europeans, Indo-Iranians were scattered along the steppe of Eurasia, with a spread zone substantiated by confirmed movements of Iranian-speaking tribes into Western and Central Europe, over Kazakhstan, Southern Russia, and as east as Western China (Ara, 2008, p. 59). Indo-Aryans inhabited northwestern India, the Punjab territory, and Anatolia, while the Iranians occupied Iran—the region comprising modern Afghanistan, Iran, and sections of Central Asia, namely in the region enclosed by the Yaxartes and Oxus rivers (Ara, 2008, p. 59).

1.2 Indo-Iranian Eschatological Connections to Aryans

The Indo-Iranians contain a prehistory dating back to the Indo-European linguistic grouping, and further back in time. They were shaped by neighboring tenets they crossed paths with during the migration routes into Central Asia. Archaeological archives and the BMAC of Central Asia give evidence of the religious and cultural diversity of the Indo-Iranian environment (Ara, 2008, p. 69). Along with the cemeteries and graves found are Aryan temples and the fortress of Togolok 21 (Ara, 2008, p. 69). The temple of the Indo-Iranians was discovered east of Turkmenistan, in Karakum from the first half of the second millennium B.C.E. Sarianidi explains the Togolok 21 fortress as sharing analogous dates with the Bactrian temples, including characteristics of Indo-Iranian worship (Sarianidi, 1990; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 69). Sarianidi describes the temple's varied cells and altars with phallic objects tied to the phallic cult, and similar artifacts located in Harappan¹⁴ and Bactrian traditions (Sarianidi, 1990; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 69-70). Vessels for libationary purposes—including paintings of snakes and frogs, resembled symbols of Old Europe (Ara, 2008, p. 70). The Indo-Iranian religion was priestlike, with emphasis on ritual practices within appointed locations for the orthodox preparation and ritual performance (Ara, 2008, p. 70). Along with the available archaeological evidence, the fundamentals of linguistics were paramount to the examination of religion by presenting the religious development of Indo-Iranians within the confines of cultural variation (Ara, 2008, p. 70). Aryans shared comparable tangible and sociocultural roots to a degree, thus shaping their religious progression. The Indo-Iranians were pastoral peoples, holding cattle as the most important aspect of their lives, with various purposes such as leather, food, purifying supplements, and fuel. The cow shared a top role in the religion of Old Europe and Indo-Europeans, representing existence and nourishment. The Indo-Iranians resided in tribes (Avestan *zantu*), considered all Aryan tribes as one unit and a singular country (*dahyu*), and held social structure to be significant (Ara, 2008, p. 71). The ancient Indo-European social classes were rooted in the tripartite creation¹⁵ of the Indo-Iranians. This caste system served as the basis of social construction—known as the Aryan divisions. The traditions and religious practices of Indo-Iranians shared numerous similarities with the Indo-Europeans, and their philosophies did not starkly differ from the ancestral Indo-European ideologies—subsequently bleeding into the Indian and Iranian religions (Ara, 2008, p. 78).

1.3 Ethnonyms

The Indo-Iranian migrations of 4,000 to 2,000 B.C.E. included a language system that was the largest territorial distribution of any Indo-European subgroup spoken in Western China, northern South Asia, Central Asia, and Iran (Ara, 2008, p. 60). The capacity to reformulate a Proto-Indo-Iranian language is defended by the self-appointed *āryo-* 'Aryan' (Avestan *airya-*, Persian *ariya*, Sanskrit *ārya-*) used by Iranians and Indians (Ara, 2008, p. 61). 'Aryan' is sustained in the title of Irān (Iran), stemming from the previous word *aryānām*, and translating to [the country] of the Aryans (*Āryas*) (Ara, 2008, p. 61). Aryans, or Iranians, used a variety of dialects but formulated a "nationally self-conscious whole"¹⁶ (Ara, 2008, p. 61). This terminology "created the feeling that they were one race," as they were "careful to separate themselves from the *an-āryas*, peoples 'not Iranian'" (Ara, 2008, p. 61). According to Trautmann (1997), 'Aryan'¹⁷ appeared to be appropriate since it was the name Sanskrit speakers gave themselves and a label employed by the speakers of Old Persian (p. 13). Certainly, the label Iran is rooted in a genitive plural of this term, defined as '(land) of the Aryas' (the *Ariana* of Greek sources, identical to Sanskrit *aryānām*) (Trautmann, 1997, p. 13). Several academics proclaim the name for "Ireland, Eire" to be shared with Arya (*ārya*). Considering the vast and early spread of the word, Arya (*ārya*) is attested as the name used for all early Indo-European speakers, and by Iranians to categorize themselves (Ara, 2008, p. 61; Trautmann, 1997, p. xxxii). Initial signs of Aryan identification were cultural—namely linguistic and religious, and neither racial nor phenotypical (Trautman, 1997, p. xxxii; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 61). Ara (2008) quotes Nichols with regards to Irish and Indo-Iranian terminology, gathering that in all probability, Celtic (Irish *Eire*) is vouched as predominantly Indo-Iranian (Nichols, 1998, p. 261; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 79). *Eire* could be remodeled as an ethnonym for a crucial segment of the society (a charismatic clan?), or for the whole ethnic group at the time of the language expansion. With their ethnonyms, the Indo-Iranians held a distinguishable and esteemed religion marked by clear rituals. As for the Indo-Iranian expansion, it was a concurrent spread of religion, language, and ethnic identity (Nichols, 1998, p. 261; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 61). With regards to the linguistic spread and ethnic identity, **ārya-* is an ethnonym confirmed in Persian Irān (Iran) (Nichols, 1998, p. 261; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 61). The term 'Aryan' refers to the traditional linguistic and racial designation of the authors of the *Rg Veda* who appointed themselves as *ārya*—"noble" or "exalted one" in their vernacular to separate themselves further from non-Aryans (Ara, 2008, p. 61). The study of the early migrants of the eastern steppes was engulfed by the belief that these were Indo-European nomads, and

unquestionably Indo-Iranian. The archaeological findings all prove an Indo-Iranian cultural foundation (Ara, 2008, p. 61).

1.3.1 Iranian Language Expansion

Revisiting the ‘homeland problem’ requires a historical identification of the Aryan phrase with regards to region, geography, and the larger encompassing Indo-European family. In the matter of Iranian origins, the presumption holds that Indo-Iranians migrated south from the Ural expanse in the north. With reference to their precise direction of migration, there are two postulations. The first holds that the Indo-Iranians migrated over the Caucasus from west of the Caspian Sea. The second postulates a migration route from east of the Caspian Sea—favored by archeological evidence from Bactria and Margiana¹⁸ (Ara, 2008, p. 65). Another theory considers two migration routes to Iran—from eastern Central Asia and the northwestern route. The modern description of ‘Iranian’ is highly incongruent with its ancient extension, which included an expansive part of the Eurasian steppe. Iranian speakers included Scythians, Sarmatians, and Alans who spread their land west towards Europe.¹⁹ Iranians in the east were Parthians and Bactrians, and the Sogdians, Khotanese Saka, Khorasmians, and Tumshuqese were Iranian speakers as well (Ara, 2008, p. 65-66). Linguists sorted the indicated languages as Eastern and Northeastern Iranian, which differed from the Persian language in Western Iran. The languages of the Iranian plateau were Avestan (Old Iranian), Old and Middle Persian (Pahlavi), New Persian, Dari, Tajik, Pashto, Kurdish, and Baluchi, with Iran’s primary language being Middle Persian (Pahlavi).²⁰ The initial record naming the Persians was from the mid-ninth century B.C.E. (Ara, 2008, p. 66). The Medes (ca. 614-550 B.C.E.) from northwestern Iran were mentioned in the eighth century B.C.E., and the earliest written monuments of the Persians were the royal epigraphs of the Achaemenid rulers (550-330 B.C.E.)—mainly of Xerxes (486-465 B.C.E.) and Darius the Great (522-486 B.C.E.). Their inscriptions were engraved on a cliff in Behistun from 521 to 519 B.C.E. (Ara, 2008, p. 66; Erdosy, 1995, p. 156). Under Cyrus and Darius, Persian lands spanned west to Africa and east to India, instituting governances including northern India. The remaining written artifacts containing Iran’s history are Old Persian epigraphs by Herodotus, Darius, and the *Avesta*²¹ (Ara, 2008, p. 67). The *Avesta*—a liturgical text first sent orally like the *Vedas*,²² also contributed substantial geographical supporting evidence to suggest a social environment east of the Caspian Sea²³ (Ara, 2008, p. 67). The *Avesta* references the famous expression *airiianəm vaējō*—defined as ‘the Aryan expanse’, and conventionally pegged to be the homeland of the Aryans (Ara, 2008, p. 67). A discussion of the north-eastern homeland of the *Avesta* would allude to the question of the naming of *airiianəm vaējō*. Skærvø describes the phrase as a “mythical homeland of the Iranians” that changed identity as the tribes migrated (Erdosy, 1995, p. 166).

2. Area Descriptors

The study of Old European culture has provided a cognizance of vital sections of European prehistory that were not examined as a branch of Indo-European/Indo-Iranian studies²⁴ (Ara, 2008, p. 225). Traditionally, scholarship on the religion of Indo-Iranians/Indo-Europeans consisted of divine projections and conceptualizations between cultures, never transcending a particular point in time—as is the event when linguistic grounds for the remodeling of an archetype remains nonexistent (Ara, 2008, p. 225). Cultural identities create peoples, a gradual and building effect of the interplay between past cultures, religion, milieu, and language (Ara, 2008, p. 220). The historical progression through which all belief systems worldwide evolved illustrates a gradual combination of ideologies due to cultural contact. From the religious and linguistic foundation discovered in philological, archaeological, and eschatological evidence, it was clear the Aryans were of Indo-European ancestry. Their first homeland cannot be known for sure, yet they cohabitated as one people for a long duration of time with shared customs. Ara (2008) likely alludes to the “Aryanization of Iran and India” to underline their Indo-European roots, as both groups exchanged cultures, language, and beliefs with non-Aryan cultures.²⁵ Thus, she calls for lengthening our traditional knowledge as much as the historical testaments and archaeology permit, and to not halt at a suitable moment (Ara, 2008, p. 220, 225).

2.1 Geography, Linguistic Divisions, and the Homeland of the Iranians

Inhabitants of the Caucasus were Indo-Iranians, who emerged from the Indo-European migrations (4,000-3,500 B.C.E.) of nomadic and pastoral peoples to the north of the Caspian Sea. Migrations lead to memory of geography having a sacred meaning with land describing current location. Iran’s proximity geographically and linguistically to the southern Caucasus presents a muddled history of Iranian identity origins. Whether the Caucasus region—a terrain quartering Europe from Asia—is a site to haphazardly identify a homogenous Iranian homeland is a problem of contentious debate. The southern Caucasus was another region of great diversity for Iranian, where Persian (south-western), Kurdish and Talysh (north-western), and Ossetic (north-eastern branch of Iranian) are all found (Nichols, 1997, p. 131). The southern Caucasus also meets the northern boundary of the Persian Empire, a site of probable or known Iranian speech during the first millennium B.C.E. (Nichols, 1997, p. 132). The Caucasus region is a “serious contender for the Proto-Iranian homeland,” however historical evidence has illustrated the contrary, with false likelihood of an Iranian homeland existing so far from that of the Nuristan²⁶ and Indic branches (Nichols, 1997, p. 131). The Indo-Iranian language

group, representing the largest sub-branch of the Indo-European family tree of languages includes Indo-Aryan, Iranian, and Nūristāni languages. Recent research illustrates that Nūristāni languages preserved traits of the Aryan language that was missing in Vedic and Iranian (Ara, 2008, p. 60). The cultural, religious, and linguistic employment of Indo-Iranian vocabulary presents parallels between the Iranians and Indians, and suggests a period of Indo-Iranian unification in correspondence with the earlier Proto-Indo-European language (Ara, 2008, p. 60). In all, Indo-Iranians have appeared to leave linguistic footprints over expansive areas of Asia, and across an extensive period (Bryant, 2000, p. 129).

2.2 Dyen's Migration and Homeland Theory

According to Dyen's postulation of linguistic migration, the basic principle of migration and homeland theory considers the geographic region of the language family's proto-homeland to be found within the neighborhood of the family tree root. The family tree root includes an area where the deepest language roots converge on the map, or an area encompassing the greatest genetic heterogeneity of the language family (Sapir, [1916] 1949; Dyen, 1956; as cited in Nichols, 1997, p. 129-130). In this view, the area of a language denotes the area of its native speakers, and the migration of a language equates to the migration of several of its speakers. For a language to be said to migrate, the number of migrating speakers is considered (Dyen, 1956, p. 613). According to Sapir's 'historical centre of distribution' hypothesis, since connected languages are varying forms of a singular language, all language forms can be traced to movements from one continual area (Sapir, [1916] 1949; as cited in Dyen, 1956, p. 613). The phrase 'homeland of home' describes the center of distribution for proto-languages. The movement of a language produces an increase in the number of regions (Dyen, 1956, p. 615). Regions are regarded as sub-areas of one language, and chains include a region of a simple family of languages (Dyen, 1956, p. 615). Both the vicinity of a language and amount of its regions must increase for a migration to occur. The distribution of each language is represented by the successive proto-languages it belongs to. A homeland can possibly be equated to the area of the proto-language it infers (Dyen, 1956, p. 617-618).

2.3 Nichols' Theory of the Indo-European Linguistic Spread

Nichols (1997) presents a theoretical direction of Indo-European (IE) language flow and diversity. The central Eurasian spread zone includes languages drawn into the spread zone extending to the west, replaced by the following spreading family (Nichols, 1997, p. 130). Each language family's dispersal occurs after entering the spread zone. The location of dispersal for each family is the locus of the family's proto-homeland, which will eventually be taken over by the next language that enters (Nichols, 1997, p. 130). For each language family that expands from the central Eurasian spread zone, the region with the most genetic variation can be located someplace on the edge of the radius, or at the very tip of the trajectory of linguistic spread. For the language family of the Indo-Europeans (IE), an immense diversity is located very early on the western borders of the desert and steppe routes (Nichols, 1997, p. 130). The southern trajectory of linguistic spread is directed southward of the Caspian Sea and to the west. As Nichols (1997) notes, even very early on the genetic heterogeneity of the Indo-European language family was immense. In the order of east to west, the known ancient branches of the Indo-European tree include Indo-Iranian (1,400 B.C.E.)—known as Mitannian Aryan, later Old Persian (*satem* branch),²⁷ the ancestral Armenian group from 2,000 B.C.E. (*satem* branch), Anatolian (*centum* branch)—which would be a contender as a sister language group, rather than a daughter in accordance with the Indo-Hittite hypothesis, Phrygian (including a mix of *satem* and *centum* reflexes), along with Greek from 1,300 B.C.E. (a *centum* branch) (Nichols, 1997, p. 130; Mallory & Adams, 2006, p. 87). These branches stretch along the entire range from *centum* to *satem* and illustrate the greatest diversity of reflexes in the Indo-European stop series (Nichols, 1997, p. 130). Diakonoff (1985), Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1984, 1995), and Dolgopolsky (1987) cite extensive variations in the Indo-European languages as evidence for their suggested homelands—including trans-Caucasian, Balkan-Carpathian, and Anatolian-Balkan (Nichols, 1997, p. 130). The Indo-European heterogeneity at the western border of the steppe and the northern routes all converge in Europe, and lead to the "North-West" European languages—including Germanic, Celtic, Balto-Slavic, and Italic (Nichols, 1997, p. 130; Mallory et al., 2006, p. 79). The Iranian language family was the next wave to cross the steppe region and deserts, with the greatest diversity of languages found in the mountains of Central Asia (Edel'man, 1980; as cited in Nichols, 1997, p. 131). The ancestral Indo-Iranian language family includes the most diversity in the mountain terrain from Central Asia to the northern part of India—known as Bactria-Sogdiana, and regions to the south (Edel'man, 1980; as cited in Nichols, 1997, p. 131). Edel'man highlights that the mountains of Central Asia could not be the original center of Iranian origin, however, the region would be so if the principle of most genetic heterogeneity were technically employed (Edel'man, 1980; as cited in Nichols, 1997, p. 131). Figure 1 presents the language trajectory of the Indo-European linguistic expansion. Due to the expansion of an entire culture likely including a linguistic spread, the direction of language spread from east to west remains consistent with an east-to-west directionality of cultural derivation—and conversely (Nichols, 1997, p. 140).

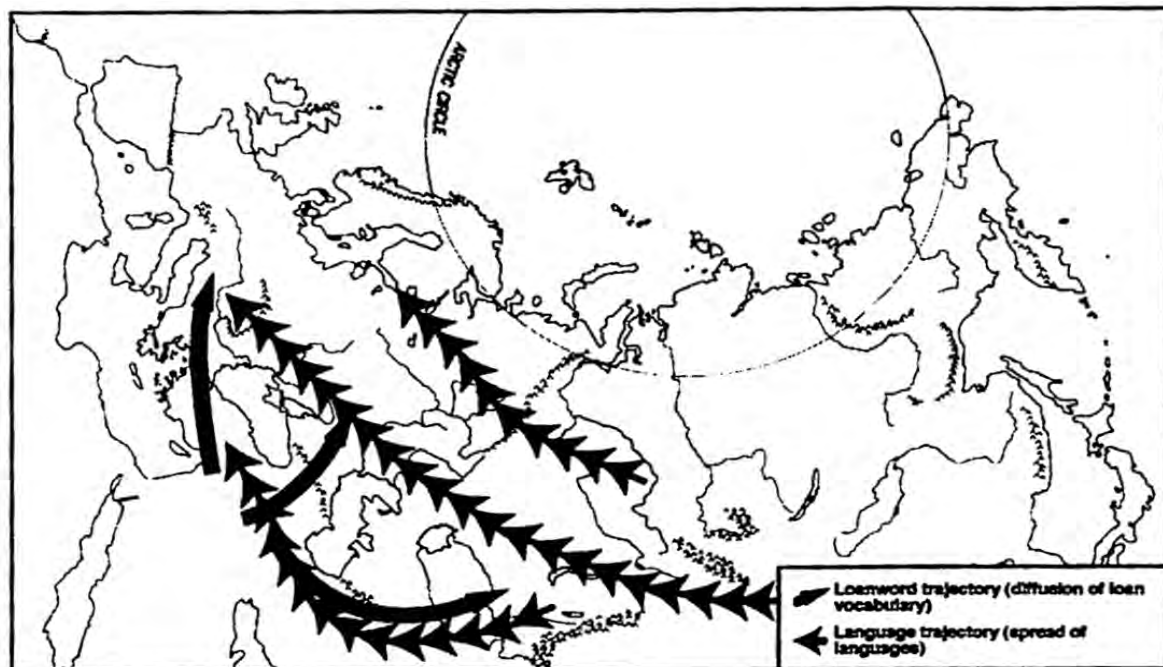


Figure 1. “The central Eurasian spread zone”

Description: Derived from Nichols’ (1997) “The epicenter of the Indo-European linguistic spread.” The image maps out the trajectory of languages spreading west, taken over by the succeeding language family. The Indo-European language diversity at the western border of the steppe and northern routes all converge in Europe (Nichols, 1997, p. 131).

When identifying the Indo-Iranian homeland, the historical language trajectory from the central Eurasian spread zone must be considered, along with the points of greatest diversity of Indo-European language spread. For Turkic and Iranian, further areas of massive diversity are located in western Central Asia, and from the vitality of historical data these are propositioned to be near, not equivalent, to the proto-homelands (Nichols, 1997, p. 133). In the matter of Iranian, the arrival of Persian and Kurdish to the Caucasus is a comparatively recent stage in their western spread. For Iranian and Turkic, the heterogeneity lives in the Caucasus—a well-accepted pool of language diversity, the central Asian mountains, where southeastern Iranian languages and the Nuristan branch of Indo-Iranian remains—as well as the solitary Burushaski, and the middle to upper Volga, where the branches of Finno-Ugric and Turkic have prolonged (Nichols, 1997, p. 133). Since the confirmed survivals of deep language diversity are secondary accumulations, the expansive ancient Indo-European variety of the Transcaucasus and Anatolia are an early secondary language accumulation as well (Nichols, 1997, p. 133-134). This ancient diversity proves the scope of Proto-Indo-European and the routes of its trajectories, not the locus of its language spread (Nichols, 1997, p. 134).

2.3.1 The Principle of Migration and Homeland Theory

As indicated earlier, the basic principle of migration and homeland theory considers the geographic region of the language family’s proto-homeland to be found within the neighborhood of the root of the family tree—or more broadly, the homeland is to be found in the area of most genetic variation of the language family (Sapir, [1916] 1949; Dyen, 1956; as cited in Nichols, 1997, p. 129-130). According to Nichols (1997), this theory works well when languages from the family under consideration are continuously spoken within or near the proto-homeland. With regards to families carrying roots in “spread zones,” the postulation of migration and homeland theory is not likely to be applicable in an uncomplicated sense, “and for those of central Eurasia, it is demonstrably false” (Nichols, 1997, p. 129-130). Dyen’s definition of homeland includes a continual region, and migration is denoted by a movement of language out of the region that causes discontinuity—separating itself from the area (Dyen 1956; as cited in Bryant, 2000, p. 151). According to Nichols’ Bactrian homeland theory, the Proto-Indo-European language spreads out of its central place of origin or locus, forming trajectories on a language map (Nichols, 1997, p. 131; as cited in Bryant, 2000, p. 152). The language trajectory radiates westward, taking over the Aral lake to the Iranian plateau from the northern steppe. Once the language reaches the Caspian Sea, a route spreads around the sea over the Central Asian steppes to the north—reaching the Black Sea. The other trajectory expands towards Anatolia²⁸ (Nichols, 1997, p. 131; as cited in Bryant, 2000, p. 152). This model of Proto-Indo-European language dispersal exists as a dialectic chain, engulfing a vast expanse where later an-

cient dialects sprout from the unified Proto-Indo-European stock (Bryant, 2000, p. 152, 201).

With the heterogeneity of Proto-Indo-European and the various routes of its trajectories entering at different times, the conception of an Iranian homeland requires a layered, thorough, and concise explanation with respect to linguistic origin and historical language dispersal (Nichols, 1997, p. 133-134). All migrations of languages were expansions—including all practicable movements that formulated natural speech communities lasting generations and branching into dialects. All “geographically isolated languages” appeared to be residues of previous continuous linguistic distributions (Nichols, 1997, p. 136). With respect to its locus of language dispersal, Proto-Indo-European was no linear movement, but entirely ordinary for its geography and period (Nichols, 1997, p. 138). Nonetheless, Nichols positions a Proto-Indo-European point of origin in western Central Asia. Her evidence substantiates the long-established westward language trajectories pointing to an eastern locus. Considering the Indo-European language spread along each of the three trajectories, Nichols draws a locus “well to the east of the Caspian Sea...somewhere in the vicinity of ancient Bactria Sogdiana” (Nichols, 1997, p. 137; as cited in Bryant, 2000, p. 151).

2.4 Indo-European Languages: Internal and External Relationships

Mallory and Adams (2006) allude to the internal and external correlations among the diverse Indo-European languages and subgroups (p. 71). August Schleicher proposed a tree model for the Indo-European language groups. Figure 2 presents Schleicher’s family tree of Indo-European languages and their subgroups (Mallory & Adams, 2006, p. 72). The family tree concept was one of the earliest models charting relations between the varying Indo-European groups, shown by a common trunk [Stammbaum] (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 72). The matter in question with the tree hypothesis is in its simplicity and the “clean breaks” between the language branches after their divergence. Linguists analyzing the contemporary Indo-European languages would vocalize the dialectical dissimilarities existing through some of the areas. The adjacent languages that could be part of different groups may be linked (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 72). This complexity and similarity between separate branches are part of the “Wave Theory” [Wellentheorie], noted by its criteria of inclusion (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 72).

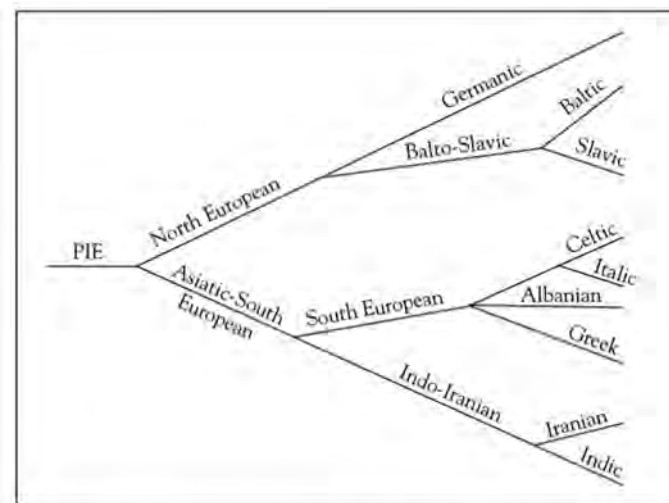


Figure 2. Schleicher’s Family Tree of Indo-European Languages

Description: Derived from Mallory and Adams’ (2006) *The Oxford introduction to proto-Indo-European and the proto-Indo-European world*. The family tree presents language divisions starting from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root, and ending with Baltic, Slavic, and German [Northern-European], along with Celtic, Italic, Albanian, Greek, Iranian, and Indic [Asiatic-South European] (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 72).

Indo-Iranian is the single undisputed branch of the Indo-European language family connecting the Indo-Aryan and Iranian languages (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 76). The Indo-Aryan language split from Iranian around 2,000 B.C.E., with evidence by 1,400 B.C.E. of a distinguishable Indo-Aryan language. In-between the Proto-Indo-European stem, and Indo-Aryan and Iranian groups is the common Indo-Iranian ancestral language stage (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 76-77). The Nūristāni languages of the Hindu-Kush would be an added subgroup to Proto-Indo-Iranian, with arguments as to whether the third language subgroup is closer to Indo-Aryan or Iranian (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 76-77). There are common words between the Iranian and Indic languages that are nonexistent in other Indo-European languages. Religious

concepts exist within the Proto-Indo-Iranian stem—both Iranians and Indo-Aryans drank the soma juices [Indo-Iranian **sauma* > Avestan *haoma* and Sanskrit *soma*]. Several shared deities, series of animals, architecture titles, and other terms point to the Indo-Aryan and Iranian connection. These commonalities hint that the Proto-Indo-Iranians picked up particular loanwords from a culture other than Indo-European prior to initiating divisions into language subgroups (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 77). Indo-Iranian and Balto-Slavic languages also share satemisation as part of the Eastern sub-families and formulate a west-east dialect continuum, with distinct traits throughout both languages (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 79). Ties also exist between the Graeco-Armenian and Indo-Iranian groups, with lexical isoglosses existing only in Greek and Indo-Iranian (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 79).

2.5 Onomastics, the ‘Homeland Problem’, and Pseudo-Scientific Labels

There were periods of a generally accepted position regarding the ‘homeland problem’, with a European homeland as the predominant selection of the majority of scholars beginning in the early nineteenth hundreds (Mallory & Adams, 2006, p. 443). With an overall identical volume of evidence and a great amount of debate, the vast methodological differences concerning the Indo-European remains a subject of contention (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 443). Facile connections between geographic location, language conception, and contact were alarming to linguists. The use of the Indo-European family tree as a partial alternative to the geographic similarities between varying languages has been a common practice in the production of solutions to the homeland debate (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 443). There are several issues with this approach—contending family trees are used to analyze the Indo-European languages, and the variations supersede the kinds of topographic similarities presumed. As Mallory and Adams (2006) note:

It is presumptuous to read geographical co-ordinates into a linguistic relationship. For example, although many trees will suggest reasons for placing the Indo-Iranians linguistically close to the Greeks and Armenians, how do we translate this relationship into a geographical expression of where they may have shared this mutual development (or contact)? It may have been in India, Iran, the steppes, Anatolia, the Balkans, Greece itself, or somewhere outside this broad band (p. 446).

The study of the origin of names—the onomastics approach, would suggest that the proto-language left identifiable clues in the landscape itself. Within Iranian tradition, onomastics speak of the “seed of the Aryans”—the *Airyana vaeja*, which denoted an unnamed geographic area. Onomastic traditions led Orientalists to localize the phrase in a singular area, often presuming that the ‘Aryan’ homeland could be that of the Proto-Indo-Europeans—their predecessors (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 447). In actuality, the *Airyana vaeja* would be an Iranian homeland exclusively (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 447). When determining the Indo-European homeland, one continuous argument relies on the foundation of purely linguistic evidence, with a point of origin residing around the least altered Indo-European language. According to this homeland argument—a principle initiated by linguists of the nineteenth century, if a language found its footing and remains static, it experiences much lower momentum to modification through contact with other languages, than those affected by more distant migrations (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 447). This conservative presumption of the Indo-European homeland question fails on multiple levels. For its application, one must gauge the level of conservatism regarding the different Indo-European languages. Such analogizing fails due to an uneven playing field of various languages making their way into the historical record at inconsistent times. Comparing more than three language groups—Indo-Iranian, Greek, and late Anatolian at 1,000 B.C.E. does not consider the full kaleidoscope of Indo-European languages. Employing the language comparison method assumes that languages are a product of their exposure, i.e., encountering external languages. Language change can be influenced by the former method, yet there are several reasons for language modification (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 448).

The use of material anthropological evidence to locate the Indo-European homeland served as a mechanism of the late eighteenth hundreds, however, the overabundance of chauvinists led to minimal supporters. The twentieth-century presumption was that human anatomical types could suffice as representative proof for native speakers of a group of languages, and multiple approaches were made in the field of physical anthropology to define a language homeland—one was through phenotypical appearance of peoples (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 449). Scholars then argued via the defense of historical records and literature, illustrating a description of proto-Indo-Europeans with blonde or brunette features. With various meanings of colors in ancient literature, the interpretation remains contextually subjective. Phenotypical evidence as a marker of homeland led pseudoscientists to characterize the Indo-European homeland as physically equivalent to European features, with only one area or region representing their homeland. This argument of an Indo-European uniformity in phenotype could not hold true given the physically different Indo-European speakers (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 450).

2.5.1 Ethnohistorical Assertions

According to Kuzmina (1994a), the massive Proto-Indo-European migrations (3,200 to 2,200 B.C.E.) were driven by the shortage of food supplies from failing climate conditions, and by a “contentious” search for modes of subsistence economies and fresh fertile lands (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 143). The dependency on migrations as the primal catalyst for changes in social structure was normal within Soviet era archaeological explanations. With respect to the gravity of migrations, there was an obscured differentiation between linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and racial entities, a call for isolating ethnic and racial groups by craniometric means within the physical anthropological field, and an application of linguistic paleontology to remodel the cultural progression of cultural types (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 143). Kuzmina (1994a) deployed archaeological explanations and considerable ethnohistorical evidence to validate that the southern Urals were an original homeland of the Indo-Iranians (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 144). She mapped out a set of general rules for “the methods of ethnic attribution” to decrypt Indo-Iranian culture, including: (1) retrospective correlation, where an ethnic identification is concocted for an archaeological culture by finding analogues to an ancestral culture, whose ethnicity is formulated by recorded texts, (2) the linguistic approach, comprised of the retrospective method deducing ethnic attribution, and then correlating this to lexicostatistic evidence of the economy in terms of type and level, (3) authentication by finding and organizing evidence of migration routes, and charting the indicators via space and time, (4) the use of the anthropological method consisting of indicating a groups biological homogeneity from craniometric analyses, (5) the confirmation of language contact, including the study of toponymic connections, and linguistic substratum, (6) the reformulation of an ideology (“spiritual culture”) and culture, coming from a study of linguistic and archaeological evidence (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 144-145). These “methods of ethnic attributions” used by means of anthropometric investigation to unravel Indo-Iranian culture and identity lead to certain risks. The added pseudo-scientific approach to linguistic, topographic, and lexicostatistic analyses reinstates an essentialist nomenclature and typology for the historically situated Indo-Iranians.

2.5.2 Race and Philology

Bryant (2000) indicates that through the mid-nineteen hundreds, the word race was utilized to identify what today would be defined as an ethnic category instead of referring to the divisions of Caucasian, Mongoloid, and others, according to present usage of the terms (p. 24). In the eighteen hundreds, ‘nation’ and ‘race’ were “more or less interchangeable,” yet became further separated over the next hundred years as nation grew more politicised, and race more biologized (Bryant, 2000, p. 24). In Isaac Taylor’s synopsis towards race scientists, he proclaimed that the “identity of speech does not imply identity of race” (Taylor, 1892 [1988]; as cited in Bryant, 2000, p. 25). Taylor further implied that speaking the same language did not mean both parties were of the same race, and the same could be said of two races sharing the Indo-European language connection (Taylor, 1892 [1988]; as cited in Bryant, 2000, p. 25). Scholars like N.S. Trubetskoy preferred to theorize that the initially distinct languages of the Indo-Europeans grew similar via regional proximity (Bryant, 2000, p. 36). According to philologist Rüdiger Schmitt, with Indo-Europeans being a linguistic concept, language and philology could precisely point to their whereabouts, from which archeology can be called upon to identify them tangibly (Schmitt, 1974; as cited in Bryant, 2000, p. 44). The notion of an Iranian homeland from Indo-European ancestry leads to the hypothesizing of ties between language and homeland—along with its politicization.

2.6 Deconstructing the Aryan Myth

Ara (2008) cites scholarly confusion concerning the precise forensic employment of the terms ‘Aryan’ and ‘Indo-Aryan’. ‘Aryan’ represented many ethnic groups that were ascribed to a recently rising doctrine. ‘Indo-Aryan’ referred to speakers of a language subgroup within the Indo-Iranic branch of the Indo-European language family. ‘Aryan’ and ‘Indo-Aryan’ are not contiguous with racial groups. Yet the cultural, linguistic, and religious implementation of Indo-Iranian and Aryan in reference to periods of their unity remain exchangeable (Ara, 2008, p. 60). A dismissal of the ‘Aryan Myth’ is required before reviewing the Indo-European tradition. With regards to the mythical term, Ara (2008) highlights Mallory’s attestation of the familiar concept of racial supremacy implemented in Europe, where a bizarre obsession with the Indo-Europeans, or popularly equated ‘Aryans’, was a conceptualization of fanatics. The sensationized term ‘Aryan’ remains a segment of the academic setting of the eighteen and nineteen hundreds, where Max Müller and other linguists reinforced its use to identify the Indo-Europeans. If the earlier denoted Aryans happened to be the forefathers of the Europeans, they were also from the “superior white race.” In this sense, the “myth of Aryan supremacy” remained a linguistic concept taken out of context by nineteenth-century European scientists, with a successive molding onto a practice of prejudices, speculations, and political ambitions (Mallory, 1989, p. 276; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 61). The Aryan concept’s appeal was due to its science-oriented approach (Kennedy, 1995, p. 34). The engagement with linguistic terminology to affirm a relatedness with Aryan ancestry created idealizations of race and ancestry, and fueled the embezzlement of a linguistic concept that permeates Western academic interpretations of the Aryan myth. Parpola (1995) makes the case of matching philological with archaeological evidence on the Aryans’ entry

to India and Iran²⁹ (Parpola, 1995, p. 353). Respectively, when considering the close historical connections between the Indo-Aryans and Aryans, reductive associations between region, homeland, and migration require a more thorough philological synopsis. A transparent historical record of linguistic spread has been cumbersome to maintain, and the discussion of the Aryan question has been reviewed from various fields—including the textual, archeological, anthropological, and historiographical (Sharma, 1995, p. 177). The multidisciplinary approaches lead way to certain dangers—Parpola’s previously mentioned methodologies consist of a specialized field that require intellectual energies to be channeled in a unilateral direction. The employments mentioned illustrate Orientalist developments within the environment of modern intellectual practices that prove valuable in recovering the past (Sharma, 1995, p. 177). Even so, the scope to which the modern approaches add to the traditional applications of the culture analyzed ensures a risk—what is valuable within the receiving tradition may be renounced during the study (Sharma, 1995, p. 177). Rash access to traditional archives by authors seeking to study Iranian historical whereabouts could objectively fail in respecting region, time, and space—and lead to the indirect politicization and misappropriation of the Aryan term in the philological and archaeological sense.

3. Discussion

Within the early 1920s, the word ‘Iranology’ became canonized, connoting a section of Asian studies centered on science-oriented Iranistics (Bulookbashi, 2009, p. 19; Ede, 2023, p. 2). Ethnographic accounts conducted by foreign anthropologists in Iran were a significant section of Iranian studies disregarded for a period and deplored by some scholars. Leading into the 1970s, scientific forums on Iranology hosted by foreign orientalists and Iranians concentrated mainly on the history, archaeology, language, literature, and religion of Iran (Bulookbashi, 2009, p. 26). In the West, anthropological studies became a recognized discipline under the social sciences, with European and North American scholars performing studies on ‘other cultures’ in Africa and Asia. Within the eighteenth hundreds, anthropologists began focusing on Iran, journeying to the country to conduct ethnographic field research (Bulookbashi, 2009, p. 20). Since then, a Euro-American interest in compiling knowledge about Iran and its peoples became plain as scholars successively began quests to Iran to study the history and archaeology (Bulookbashi, 2009, p. 19). In the early nineteenth hundreds, Henry Field, an American anthropologist, ushered in a historical project in Iran to conduct an all-encompassing anthropological field research known as the Field Museum of Natural History. His studies were named *Contributions to the Anthropology of Iran* (1939), a master text rooted in anthropometric evidence concerning the phenotypical features of Iranian inhabitants (Bulookbashi, 2009, p. 20; Spivak, 1990, p. 73). The global understanding of Iranian studies is based on the works of Henry Field, and other notable twentieth-century anthropologists who provided literature and a canonization of the physical anthropology of Iran. Eschatologists worthy of noting include Mitra Ara, a cultural historian and philologist who laid an all-encompassing review of the genesis of Indo-Iranian traditions via a linguistic, theological, and archaeological account—without which a renovated lens of Iranian studies would be non-existent. The postcolonial³⁰ criticism of scholarship concocted by anthropologists includes Field’s anthropometric examination of Iranian inhabitants, Kuzmina’s (1994a) anthropological attempts of indexing gradations of biological relatedness between Indo-Iranian populations, and overall ventures on behalf of American and Russian scholars to identify the historical identities of the Indo-Iranians by pseudo-scientific means. These ‘archival’ examinations have been the topic of twentieth and twenty-first century postcolonial theorists who call such axiomatic observations a Western literary motivation of racial typology, marked by an attempt to construct a global circulation of Iranian historical development. In the matter of the academic quest for an Indo-European homeland, if the *raison d’être* of post-colonial criticism is the pseudo-scientific analysis of Indo-Iranians, such a scholarly endeavor would serve as a hindrance to an orthodox linguistic study of Iranian origins, and contribution to the historical field. Approaching the study of Iranian history and its peoples by scholars situated within the country—and extending space for interpretation of ancient Iranian culture, language, society, et cetera, would serve as preeminent according to current postcolonial critics. Foreign anthropologists such as Henry Field, Fredrik Barth, and Carl Feilberg who served as trailblazers of modern *Iranshenâsi* (Iranology),³¹ and catalysts in bringing forth the study of Iranian cultures and societies to the forefront of Western eyes warrants further discussion. Such a scholarly endeavor, regardless of concurrent contention by postcolonial scholars, has facilitated a precise analysis of Iranian origins throughout the English-speaking world in the epistemological, ethnographic, and linguistic sense. Given the elements that may be lost in translation when studying language histories, peoples, cultures, and traditions of alterity³²—it nonetheless remains practical to analyze the West versus East dynamic with regards to the obtaining, transliteration, and proliferation of literature on the genesis and history of Iran.

4. Conclusions

In the matter of studies on the Indo-European problem, Bryant and Patton (2005) present a range of “revisionist scholarship” used in the literal sense to denote research that is assembled to revise—in other words, to review and reassess categories of history and theories produced over the past two hundred years. They find all Indo-European homeland propositions, which they coin as “homeland locating enterprises,” to be highly problematic and implausible. The ‘home-

land problem' has not improved further than two centuries prior when Max Müller originally proposed a site of origin as "somewhere in Asia, and no more" (Bryant & Patton, 2005, p. 470). The answer to the 'homeland problem' was one of the utmost enticing intellectual ventures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the debate has led to a gargantuan amount of research, most of which has been manufactured by Euro-American scholars seeking to reformulate the Indo-European proto-language, find the indigenous homeland where the dialect was enunciated, and produce speculations on the sociocultural lifestyle of the proto-language speakers. Habitually, the search for the genesis of Western civilization has generated a (re)writing of primitive histories of countries outside of Europe that fall into the language family of the Indo-Europeans (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 468). The historical reconstruction of the Indo-Europeans cannot occur in vacuity, as a set of beliefs are at issue in this disputed history (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 470). The homeland debate remains an intriguing matter, however, the debate regarding Aryan origins has become grating and political for scholars globally, causing a hindrance to engage in amiable discussions on the matter (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 470). Bryant and Patton (2005) summarize and restate the key explanations as to why a fervent disagreement over the 'homeland problem' was concocted, and why a handful of scholars have deemed it necessary to revisit or question the Aryan debate. The first includes doubts as to the scholarly motives of the nineteenth century that initially structured the theory. Further reasons include the imperatives of nationalists and the substantial portion of evidence that remains permeable to change (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 471).

Bryant and Patton (2005) call attention to some of the most vital issues requiring further scholarly attention in the matter of the 'homeland problem', including the discourses surrounding the debate. Commonly, a persuasive and detailed proposal provided via archaeology becomes wholly disputed by testimonies from another field—such as linguistics, and contrariwise (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 474). As it happens, scholars within their own disciplines entirely disagree with one another, as an effort to confine or magnify one facet of the evidence as crucial is refuted by contradictory conclusions formed by other factors (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 474). Within the few current theories in the field, there remains little agreement on rudimentary issues—such as the archaeological data used by Nichols (1997) to reformulate a Bactrian homeland, by Gimbutas (1997) to rebuild a combative nomad Indo-European warrior from the Steppe Kurgan region in the fourth millennium B.C.E., by Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995) to recreate a tropical Near Eastern Indo-European homeland,³³ and on behalf of Renfrew (1987) to rebuild a sedentary pastoral proto-Indo-European of Anatolia in the seventh millennium B.C.E. (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 474). With the resulting disagreement on the Aryan course of existence—withstanding over two centuries of investigation, the discourse surrounding Aryan origins could be regulated to a more tactful approach, given the questionable footprint of nineteenth-century Western scholarship³⁴ on the historical legacy of the Indo-European 'homeland problem' (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 474-475).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the professors who managed my studies, and the authors who incited the research. This work would not have been possible without their scholarly inspiration.

Data Availability Statement

The author confirms that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within *The Oxford introduction to proto-Indo-European and the proto-Indo-European world* and "The epicenter of the Indo-European linguistic spread" [and/or] its supplementary materials. Figure 1 can be found in the following DOI: https://www.academia.edu/28869625/The_epicenter_of_the_Indo-European_linguistic_spread.

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Notes

Note 1. The unexpected grouping of languages in the Indo-European family was a practice performed by Orientalists of the nineteenth century (Trautmann, 1997, p. xxxi).

Note 2. Elena Kuzmina (1994a) sets the period of the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) community as occurring generally between 4,500 to 2,500 B.C.E., and the spread happening from 3,200 and 2,200 B.C.E. (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 143).

Note 3. According to Mallory and Adams (2006), Proto-Indo-Europeans must be established before 2,000 B.C.E. (p. 87).

Note 4. This group included the Tocharians, Hittites, Armenians, and Phrygians (Ara, 2008, p. 55).

Note 5. Indo-European was elementally a linguistic construct used for scholarship in fields such as history, anthropology, mythology, and comparative religion. This has invoked the various religions of these peoples to be Indo-European. Extensive research on the Indo-Europeans in the last hundred years has created a multitude of different perspectives, a detailed discussion beyond the realm of this study (Ara, 2008, p. 7).

Note 6. The area gave an easy contact zone with the Finno-Ugrian languages (Ara, 2008, p. 57).

Note 7. According to Ara (2008), “Andronovo” was a blanket name rooted in Gimbutas’ Kurgan archaeological discoveries (p. 57).

Note 8. For a conclusive record of research, view Jettmar (1951).

Note 9. According to Lamberg-Karlovsky (2004), the variations in the Andronovo subsocieties are rooted in differences in pottery ornamentations, forms of houses, patterns of settlement, along with funeral rituals and facilities. Scholars still have a deficient comprehensive combination of evidence weaving together the massive quantity of data at disposal, and a good deal of excavations remain unpublished. Textual data for the variants in material culture are abysmally recorded, theoretical movements of populations are attested and not proven, and plain incongruities in translations between different scholars remain unsettled. There is simply a lack of sequential jurisdiction over the different cultures spanning the thousand years of Andronovo peoples (p. 146).

Note 10. The Federovo culture—a late variant of the Andronovo, would be established as Indo-Aryan (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 145).

Note 11. The list of Kuzmina’s (1994a) “ethnic indicators” such as horse rites, horse breeding, common pottery forms, absence of swine in diet, architecture templates, and shared burial motifs can also be utilized to indicate the Iranian, Turk, and Arab—three separate linguistic and ethnic groups (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 145).

Note 12. For more reference see Parpola (1995).

Note 13. See Elizarenkova (1999) and Rau (1983).

Note 14. Around 2,500 B.C.E. in the Indus Valley, Harappan civilization emerged with Harappa as an important city. The city’s influence spread five hundred thousand square miles, more than that of Mesopotamia or Ancient Egypt. Archaeologists discovered similarly styled pottery, toys, tools, and jewelry at over one thousand Harappan sites. These comparable products present powerful cultural links between people separated by over a hundred miles. The similarity in cultural relics hints that the Harappan state had a powerful centralized government. The Harappans were long-distance merchants, using vessels and likely the earliest wheeled vehicles. Their expansive trade route spread into present day Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq, where archaeologists uncovered Harappan ivory, gold, and copper (National Geographic Learning, 2018).

Note 15. According to the old Indo-Iranian religious beliefs, the tripartite creation was composed of three layers as a basis of social construction. The social divisions among Iranians noted in the *Avesta* refers to a tripartite order—*āthra-van* ‘priest’, *rathaēštār* ‘one who stands in the chariot, a warrior’, and *vāstryō-fšuyant* ‘husbandman, farmer’ (Ara, 2008, p. 71-72).

Note 16. See Burrow (1973, p. 1-3) and Zaehner (1961, p. 20).

Note 17. Around 1,500 B.C.E., masses of people entered India by crossing the Hindu Kush. These nomads were a group of tribes known as the Aryans. Aryans consisted of Indo-Europeans who inhabited Central Asia, although several academics have engaged in debates over the theory. They were semi-nomadic herdsmen of livestock and horses, and competitive warriors. Aryans constructed primitive homes, rode horses, and utilized wheeled chariots (National Geographic Learning, 2018).

Note 18. See Mallory (1989, p. 48-56), Zaehner (1961, p. 20), Sarianidi (1979), and Lamberg-Karlovsky (1986).

Note 19. The Sarmatians and Alans went to North Africa through Europe. The relics of the Alans are in the central Caucasus (Ara, 2008, p. 65-66).

Note 20. The Pahlavi language remained until the seventh-century Arab conquest of Iran (Khanbaghi, 2009, p. 202; Ara, 2008, p. 66).

Note 21. 'Avestan' retrieved the name from the early religious scriptures called *Avesta*, most likely meaning 'Authoritative Utterances' (Ara, 2008, p. 67).

Note 22. The hymns and rituals of Brahmanism were recorded in the sacred texts known as the *Vedas*. The *Rg Veda* is the oldest written work, containing one thousand and twenty-eight melodic hymns. The *Vedas* are composed of four sacred texts, likely recorded from 1,500 to 1,200 B.C.E. Following the written form of Sanskrit, the *Vedas* were recorded (National Geographic Learning, 2018).

Note 23. See Boyce (1984) and Mallory (1989).

Note 24. Refer to Gimbutas (1991).

Note 25. Refer to Mallory (1989) and Gimbutas (1991).

Note 26. According to the Indo-Hittite hypothesis, the language group shares Asiatic Indo-European roots with the Iranian language (Mallory & Adams, 2006, p. 74).

Note 27. Both *satem* and *centum* languages were discovered in Central Asia prior to the Turkic spread (Nichols, 1997, p. 134).

Note 28. According to Bryant (2000), satemization is favored within Nichols' model in the form of an isogloss expanding partially from the locus along each of the three trajectories (p. 330).

Note 29. For more reference, view Parpola (1988), Parpola (1993a), Parpola (1993b), Parpola (1994, p. 142-159).

Note 30. The term 'postcolonial' can be somewhat misleading. In a broad sense, the term refers to the timespan that began with colonization. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin articulate the postcolonial as referencing cultures influenced by the imperial course from the time of colonization to the present. Postcolonialism attempts to study the cultures of the Third World. More serious critics protest that postcolonial theory overlooks the economics of colonialism and imperialism (Macey, 2000, p. 305).

Note 31. A viewpoint denoted by the Orientalist interest in contriving knowledge about Iran and its peoples via the study of archaeology, language, religions, literature, and history.

Note 32. The term is used to denote 'cultural others' in anthropological terms.

Note 33. Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1984, 1995) situate a Proto-Indo-European homeland south of the Caucasus, near ancient Mesopotamia and Proto-Karvelian (Nichols, 1997, p. 138).

Note 34. Bryant and Patton (2005) note that from the opposing stance, while recognizing the colonial biases as "fair game," great progressions were nevertheless forged in the eighteen hundreds for the gathering of evidence, and the methodologies used to explain them (p. 474). All Western academics should not be tarred with the same brush (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 474).

Appendix A

Abbreviations and Symbols

Abbreviations

Av	Avesta, Avestan (Ara, 2008, p. xiii)
B.C.E.	<i>Before Common Era</i> (Ara, 2008, p. xiii)
IE	Indo-European (Ara, 2008, p. xiii)
Iir	Indo-Iranian (Ara, 2008, p. xiii)
OE	Old-Europe/European (Ara, 2008, p. xiii)
PIE	Proto-Indo-European (Ara, 2008, p. xiv)
PIIr	Proto-Indo-Iranian (Ara, 2008, p. xiv)
Skt	Sanskrit (Ara, 2008, p. xiv)

Symbols

- [] Inside of the translations indicate an interpolation or gloss (Ara, 2008, p. xiv).
- () Inside of the translations refers to additions by translator to clarify the definition (Ara, 2008, p. xiv)
- * Indicates a reconstructed word (Ara, 2008, p. xiv).

Appendix B**Genealogy**

7,000-6,500 B.C.E.	Proto-Indo-European (PIE) settlement established in Anatolia (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142).
7,000-6,001 B.C.E.	Renfrew's (1987) proposed timespan of the Proto-Indo-Europeans (Bryant & Patton, 2005, p. 474).
5,000-4,001 B.C.E.	Mallory (1989) locates the homeland of the Proto-Indo-Europeans within this timespan (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 142).
4,000 B.C.E.	Harmatta's proposed period of contact between the Caucasus and Indo-Iranians (Harmatta, 1992, p. 368-369; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 57).
4,000-3,500 B.C.E.	Nichols' (1997) timespan of the Indo-European migrations (p. 134).
4,000-3,001 B.C.E.	Gimbutas' (1997) proposed period of the Indo-Europeans (Bryant et al., 2005, p. 474).
4,500-2,500 B.C.E.	Kuzmina's (1994a) proposed timespan of the Proto-Indo-Europeans (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 143).
2,500 B.C.E.	Indo-Iranians separate into two groups—Iranian and Indo-Aryan (Ara, 2008, p. 57).
	Harappan civilization develops in the Indus Valley (National Geographic Learning, 2018).
3,200-2,200 B.C.E.	Kuzmina's (1994a) dates of the Proto-Indo-European migrations (Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 143).

4,000-2,000 B.C.E.	Ara's (2008) proposed dates of the Indo-Iranian migrations (p.60).
3,500-2,000 B.C.E.	Ara's (2008) proposed dates of the Indo-Iranian unit based on archaeological evidence (p. 57).
2,000 B.C.E.	Indo-Aryan language split (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 76-77).
2,100-1,750 B.C.E.	Period of Indo-Iranian BMAC site (Erdosy, 1995, p. 55; Ara, 2008, p. 59).
1,700-1,501 B.C.E.	Kuzmina's proposed timespan of Aryan migrations according to Andronovo archaeological evidence (Ara, 2008, p. 58).
1,500 B.C.E.	Aryan migrants start to cross the Hindu Kush into India (National Geographic Learning, 2018).
1,400 B.C.E	Indo-Aryan language development (Mallory et al., 2006, p. 76-77).
1,500-1,200 B.C.E.	The <i>Vedas</i> were likely composed during this period (National Geographic Learning, 2018).
2,000-1,001 B.C.E.	Indo-Iranian temple discovered in Karakum (Sarianidi, 1990; as cited in Ara, 2008, p. 69).
c.a. 2,000-900 B.C.E.	Spread of the earliest culture of Indo-Iranians, known as the Andronovo culture (Ara, 2008, p. 57; Lamberg-Karlovsky, 2004, p. 144).
900-801 B.C.E.	Earliest record names the Persians (Ara, 2008, p. 66).
614-550 B.C.E.	Timespan of The Medes from northwestern Iran (Ara, 2008, p. 66; Erdosy, 1995, p. 156).

521-519 B.C.E.

Earliest written Persian monuments are engraved in Behistun (Ara, 2008, p. 66; Erdosy, 1995, p. 156).

550-330 B.C.E.

Timespan of The First Persian Empire.

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