THE PALEOLITHIC CONTINUITY THEORY
ON INDO-EUROPEAN ORIGINS:
AN INTRODUCTION

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1 The two theories on the origins of Indo-Europeans preceding the PCT

1.1 The traditional Indo-European Calcholithic Invasion Theory

As is known, until recently the received doctrine for the origins of Indo-Europeans (IE) in Europe was centered upon the idea - now called the 'myth' (Häusler 2003) - of an Indo-European Invasion in the Copper Age (IV millennium B.C.), by horse-riding warrior pastoralists. The last and most authoritative version of this theory was the so called kurgan theory, elaborated by Marija Gimbutas, according to which the Proto-IE were the warrior pastoralists who built kurgan, i.e. burial mounds, in the steppe area of Ukraine (e.g. Gimbutas 1970, 1973, 1977, 1980). From the steppe area, the Proto-IE kurgan conquerors would have then first invaded Southern Eastern Europe, then, in the III millennium, after having evolved into the so called Battle Axe people, would have somehow erased most pre-existing languages, and brought IE languages all over Europe.

By placing the arrival of the IEs in the IV millennium, and the process of transformation from Proto-IE to separate language groups in the III, the subsequent process, by which the separate language groups would evolve into the major attested languages, will inevitably take place in the II and I millennium that is in the Bronze and Iron Age.

Although most IE specialists are still reluctant to admit it, this chronology, as well as the scenario behind it, can now be considered as altogether obsolete. The evidence collected by archaeology in the last thirty years, in fact, overwhelmingly prove the absence of any large scale invasion in Europe, and the uninterrupted continuity of most Copper and Bronze Age cultures of Europe from Neolithic, and of most Neolithic cultures from Mesolithic and final Paleolithic.

Archaeologists usually do not address linguistic issues. This is probably why, although firm conclusions about absence of invasions and cultural continuity already began to appear in the archaeological literature of the Seventies, historical linguists have continued to assume the traditional theory as an undisputed truth.

1.2 Renfrew’s Neolithic Discontinuity Theory

In a book titled Archaeology and Linguistics. The IE puzzle, published in 1987, the archaeologist Lord Colin Renfrew did not limit himself to collect the
archaeological evidence now available to deliver the last fatal blow to the traditional theory, but presented a new theory of IE origins, called by its author the IE Neolithic Dispersal, which is based on the observation that the only moment in European prehistory which might coincide with a gigantic change such as the presumed indo-europeanization of Europe is the beginning of farming in the VII millennium B.C.

More over, since farming originated in the Middle East, and archaeology does detect in southern Europe a modest migratory contribution from that direction, associated with the introduction of farming, Renfrew has concluded that these early farmers were the Proto-Indo-Europeans, responsible for the introduction of IE in southern and central Europe, and that the subsequent IE dispersal started from these two areas, along with the dispersal of farming techniques. And since an intrusive contribution is especially evident in the two earliest Neolithic cultures of southern Europe, both dated to the VII millennium, namely the Balkan complex and the Impresso/Cardial Ware in Western and Central Mediterranean, and to a lesser extent in the Linienbandkeramik (LBK) culture in Germany and Eastern Europe, dated to the V millennium, these cultures would represent the first introduction of IE into Europe.

The philosophy behind this theory is thus that the Proto-Indo-Europeans, far from being warriors who invaded and conquered Europe by sheer military force, are instead the inventors of farming, who conquered Europe by cultural and intellectual superiority. A philosophy which remains, in essence, eurocentric, even though the Proto-Indo-Europeans are now seen as the peaceful inventors of farming, instead of the warlike supermen of the traditional theory.

Renfrew’s book has unleashed a very lively international debate, which has been constantly growing, at the same time shifting its focus in response to growing objections. His theory, which owing to its focus on the Neolithic discontinuity can be called the Neolithic Discontinuity Theory (NDT), is undoubtedly superior to the traditional Invasion Theory, as far as it does eliminate the myth of the PIE *Blitzkrieg* against the peaceful Old Europeans. However, for the rest it creates more problems than it solves:

1. Archaeology proves that most European Neolithic cultures directly continue earlier Mesolithic cultures, and even in those areas where intrusions are archaeologically ascertained, the Mesolithic populations were quickly involved in the acculturation process: there is no real discontinuity between Mesolithic and Neolithic (e.g. Zvelebil 1986, Zvelebil and Dolukhanov 1991).

2. The two Southern European areas, where Neolithic cultures do show infiltrations from the Middle East, are precisely the areas where non-IE linguistic traits are most evident and important, as every linguist who is familiar with the linguistic record of ancient (and modern) Italy and Greece will readily admit. Which points precisely to the contrary of what the NDT implies, namely that the South of Europe should have received the strongest influence from the PIE coming from the Middle East. To explain the real linguistic situation, in fact, the NDT assumption must be simply reversed: the Middle Eastern farmers
introducing Neolithic into Southern Europe were precisely the non-Indo-European
groups responsible for the non-IE element of the area (Alinei 2000, 2001).

(3) As far as the North and the West of Europe are concerned, the NDT is
obliged to assume that IE ‘arrived’ there long after the first Neolithic cultures.
However, that period is precisely the one in which archaeology detects no trace
whatsoever of discontinuity: there is, for example, absolutely no trace of the
‘arrival’ of the Celts in Western Europe (which simply means that they were
always there), and as to Germanic people, it is preposterous to think that the
farmers of the LBK, Proto-Germanic according to the NDT, would be motivated to
spread northward to Scandinavia and to Norway, would adopt the Mesolithic
fishing tools and deep-sea fishing techniques and habits of the rich Mesolithic
specialised fishing cultures of that area, without adopting, however, any part of
their fishing terminology, and especially without adopting any their place names:
the whole Scandinavian toponymy is either Germanic or Uralic! Obviously, the
convergence between the continuity of Northern peoples, fishing cultures and
technologies, and the Germanic or Uralic character of terminologies and place
names point to continuity of language, just as it does in the Uralic area (Alinei
2000).

(4) As I have shown in my book (Alinei 1996, 2000) and in a number of articles
(e.g. Alinei 1991g, 1992f, 1997f, 1997g, 1998e, 1998g, 2000c, 2001a, 2001d),
there is just no way to reconcile the semantic history of innumerable IE words,
and their chronological implications, with the NDT scenario. Any thorough and
unbiased analysis of the rich IE record points to a Paleolithic depth for the
earliest layers of the PIE vocabulary, and to a very early, Upper Paleolithic and
Mesolithic linguistic differentiation of Proto-Indo-Europeans. This is the reason
why the IE Neolithic terminology, as now admitted even by traditional scholars
(Villar 1991, 81), is neatly differentiated from group to group: a fact that clashes
against the very idea of the Indo-Europeans as inventors of farming (idem).

2 An interdisciplinary survey of converging conclusions on the problem
of the origin of language and languages

Discarding the two competing theories as inadequate, a really new theory of IE
origins ought to reconcile the still fundamental conquests of traditional historical
and comparative linguistics – inevitably neglected by Renfrew and his team - with
the conclusions reached by modern sciences and disciplines.

And in recent times at least five different sciences and disciplines have
addressed the problems of the origin of language in general and of languages in
particular: (i) general linguistics and, more specifically, psycho- and cognitive
linguistics, (ii) paleo-anthropology, (iii) cognitive science, (iv) genetics and (v)
archaeology. Though they have done it from different vantage points and with
different approaches, they have reached conclusions that seem to show a
remarkable convergence. It is thus on these converging conclusions that a new theory of IE (and language) origins ought to be founded.

2.1 General linguistics, Psycholinguistics, Cognitive linguistics

In general linguistics, the central idea of Noam Chomsky's revolutionary theory on the psychological and formal foundations of language is centered upon the claim that language is innate. Until recently, this claim formed a major obstacle for the integration of his theory in a Darwinian, evolutionary framework. A major breakthrough, however, independently made by scholars specialized in different sciences (see the following points), has provided an unexpected solution for this problem.

2.2 Paleoanthropology

The last twenty years of discoveries in the field have brought Ph. V. Tobias, one of the world leading specialists, to conclude that the question now is no longer whether Homo habilis spoke (which is now considered as ascertained), but whether the capacity for language was already optionally present in some Australopithecus, to become obligatory in Homo, as one of his unique traits. As he himself writes: “Several lines of evidence suggest that the rudiments of speech centers and of speaking were present already before the last common ancestral hominid population spawned Homo and the robust australopithecines […] Both sets of shoots would then have inherited the propensity for spoken language. The function would probably have been facultative in A. robustus and A. boisei, but obligate in Homo" ((Tobias 1996, 94, author's emphasis).

2.3 Cognitive Sciences

On the basis of independent evidence, a similar conclusion has been reached also in the field of cognitive sciences, by Steven Pinker, in his book on 'language instinct', inspired by Chomsky's theory of language (Pinker 1994): "a form of language could first have emerged [...] after the branch leading to humans split off from the one leading to chimpanzees. The result would be languageless chimps and approximately five to seven million years in which language could have gradually evolved" (Pinker 1994, 345). In short, language would indeed be innate in humans, but only as the result of a much longer evolution than traditionally thought, beginning with some Australopithecus.

2.4 Genetics

In genetics, the school founded and led by Luca Cavalli Sforza has made fundamental discoveries about the relationship between genetics and linguistics, such as:
(A) the areal distribution of genetic markers largely corresponds to that of the world languages (Cavalli Sforza et al. 1988, 1994, Menozzi et al. 1978 etc.);

(B) language differentiation must have proceeded step by step with the dispersal of humans (probably *Homo sapiens sapiens*) (idem).

(C) Independent geneticists working on DNA have recently ascertained that that 80% of the genetic stock of Europeans goes back to Paleolithic (e.g. Sykes 2001, 240 ff).

Despite these conclusions, for the specific problem of the origins of Indo-European languages Cavalli Sforza has first tried to adjust his data to the traditional model of the warlike invasion theory, claiming that the two data converged, and later has done the same with Renfrew’s model (Ammerman-Cavalli Sforza 1984). Nevertheless, he has recently had to surrender to the latest outcome of genetic research, i.e. that 80% of the genetic stock of Europeans goes back to Paleolithic (Sykes 2001, 240 ff). As Bryan Sykes’ has recently commented: «The Neolithic farmers ha[ve] certainly been important; but they ha[ve] only contributed about one fifth of our genes. It [is] the hunters of the Paleolithic that ha[ve]created the main body of modern European gene pool». (Bryan Sykes, 2001, 242).

2.5 Archaeology

In the last three decades, archaeological research has made quite a few revolutionary advances, among which the most well-known is the much higher chronologies of European prehistory, obtained by radiocarbon and other innovative dating techniques. However, as far as our topic is concerned, the conclusion that interests us the most—and which we have already mentioned—are:

(A) there is absolutely no trace of a gigantic warlike invasion, such as to have caused a linguistic substitution on continental scale, as envisaged by the traditional IE theory; and

(B) all Neolithic cultures of Europe either are a direct continuation of Mesolithic ones, or have been created by Mesolithic groups after their Neolithization by intrusive farmers from the Middle East.

So that, again, a language substitution of the imagined scale would be altogether unlikely. There is, instead, every possible evidence for demic and cultural continuity, from Paleolithic to the Metal Ages. Continuity is now universally considered the basic pattern of European prehistory. Even James Mallory, probably the last archaeologist who defends the IE invasion theory, has had to concede: "the archaeologists' easiest pursuit [is] the demonstration of relative continuity and absence of intrusion" (Mallory 1989, 81).
3 Two more contributions on the solution of the problem

To the five conclusions we have summarised, two more contributions on the solution of the problem of Indo-European languages can be added: the so called Uralic Continuity theory, in so far as it provides an illuminating parallel for our case; and research on history of archaeology, linguistics and ideology, in so far as it explains why the founders of IE studies were motivated to create the myth of a recent invasions of Neolithic Europe by superior IE warriors.

3.1 The Uralic Continuity Theory

In the last thirty years, there has been an important breakthrough in the history of European origins, which only recently has begun to attract the attention of specialists of other areas. This is the so called Uralic Continuity Theory (in Finnish: uralilainen jatkuvuusteoria), developed in the Seventies by archaeologists and linguists specialised in the Uralic area of Europe, that is the area of Finno-Ugric and Samoyed languages. This theory claims an uninterrupted continuity of Uralic populations and languages from Paleolithic: Uralic people would belong to the heirs of *Homo sapiens sapiens* coming from Africa, they would have occupied mid-eastern Europe in Paleolithic glacial times, and during the deglaciation of Northern Europe, in Mesolithic, would have followed the retreating icecap, eventually settling in their present territories (Meinander 1973, Nuñez 1987, 1989, 1996, 1997, 1998).

The relevance of this theory for our problem lies in the following points:

(1) it replaces an earlier ‘invasion theory’, quite similar to the traditional IE one, and practically modelled on it.

(2) It represents the first claim of uninterrupted continuity from Paleolithic of the second European linguistic phylum, thus opening the way to a similar theory for IE.

(3) It is now current not only among specialists of Finno-Ugric prehistory and of Finno-Ugric languages, but has become part of the general culture in all countries where Uralic languages are spoken.

(4) It obliges to question the validity of the until now accepted chronology for the innumerable Uralic loanwords from contiguous IE and Turkic languages.

There is thus every reason to advance a similar theory for the major linguistic phylum of Europe.
3.2 History of ideas

Many recent studies have shown that the foundation of scientific IE research in the 19th-century was deeply influenced by the contemporary Arian, Pangermanic and colonialist ideology, as first expounded in Count Joseph-Arthur De Gobineau’s, *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* (1853-1855) and Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s, *Die Grundlagen des XIX Jahrhunderts* (1899), with their emphasis on Indo-Europeans racial superiority and their inclination to war and conquest (e.g. Poliakov 1974, Römer 1985, Trigger 1989, Renfrew 1987 etc.).

Here is, for example, how Adolphe Pictet, the founder of the so called Linguistic Paleontology, in his book *Les origines des Indo-européennes ou les Aryas primitif. Essai de paléontologie linguistique*, Paris, 1859-63, described the “Arian race”: «a race destined by the Providence to dominate the whole world… Privileged among all other races for the beauty of its blood, and for the gifts of its intelligence, … this fertile race has worked to create for itself, as a means for its development, a language which is admirable for its richness, its power, its harmony and perfection of forms».

In short, the first IE specialists – imbued with European colonialism of the 19th century - chose to see the Proto-Indo-Europeans as a superior race of warriors and colonizers, who would have conquered the allegedly “pre-IE” Neolithic Europe in the Copper Age, and brought their ‘superior’ civilization to it. Moreover, since it was necessary for the Indo-European warriors to have weapons and horses, also the choice of the Copper Age was obligatory, because this was the context of Battle Axes, metallurgy and horse riding. At the same time, while the concept of the Arian super-race gave shape to the myth of the Battle-Axe horse-riding invaders, another myth, within the Arian larger myth, emerged: Pangermanism. Within the Arian superior race, the German father-founders of IE studies saw the Germanic people as the supermen, the purest and the closest to the original blessed race, and chose the Germanic area as the Urheimat of the Proto-Indo-Europeans.

After WW2, with the end of Nazi ideology, a new variant of the traditional scenario, which soon became the new canonic IE theory, was introduced by Marija Gimbutas, an ardent Baltic nationalist: the PIE Battle-Axe super-warriors were best represented by Baltic élites, instead of Germanic ones (Gimbutas 1970, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1980).

Interestingly, also the central idea of the NDT, namely that the inventors of farming were the Indo-Europeans, rather than the ‘real’ Middle-Eastern, Sumerian and/or Semitic, people, is yet another vein of this often unwitting ethnocentrism that runs through the history of research on IE origins.

4 The new synthesis: the Paleolithic Continuity Theory on the origin of Indo-European
On the basis of these converging conclusions, a **Paleolithic Continuity Theory (PCT)** on the origins of the Indo-Europeans, as well as on language origin and evolution, has been proposed (Alinei 1996-2000), the main points of which are:

4.1 **Continuity as the basic working hypothesis on the origins of IE languages**

If the demonstration of continuity, as James Mallory has had to admit, is "the archaeologists' easiest pursuit" (Mallory 1989, 81)), then it follows:

(1) that also for the question of European origin, the easiest working hypothesis is the continuity model, and no other alternative;

(2) that consequently the burden of proof now lies on the (Chalcolithic or Neolithic) invasionist's shoulders, and not on the anti-invasionist's;

(3) that as long as no alternative theory provides irrefutable counter-evidence, the Paleolithic Continuity can be considered as the winning theory.

4.2 **Antiquity and stability of language and languages, in general**

Language and languages are much more ancient than traditionally thought. Consequently, also the record of their origins, change and development must be mapped onto a much longer chronology, instead of being compressed into a few millennia, as traditionally done, and as the NDT also obliges to do. While traditional linguistics, by reifying language, had made change into a sort of biological, organic law of language development, the extraordinary tempo of it would fit the short chronologies of the recent invasion or of the earlier Neolithization, the new, much longer chronologies of language origins and language development impose a reversal of this conception: conservation is the law of language and languages, and change is the exception, being caused not by an alleged 'biological law of language', but by major external (ethnic or social) factors, i. e. by language contacts and hybridization, in concomitance with the major ecological, socio-economic and cultural events that have shaped each area of the globe (Alinei 1996).

4.3 **Antiquity and periodization of the lexicon of natural languages**

An important corollary of this new conception and new chronology of language origins and development is that the emerging and formation of the lexicon of all world language phyla and their groups, including of course Indo-European, should be 'periodized' along the entire course of human evolution, and not compressed in the recent prehistory, as typical of the traditional theory as well as of the NDT. The linguistic illustration of this principle fills many of the 2000 pages of my two volumes, and represents the first detailed linguistic analysis of the IE
record in the light of the new chronologies and scenario imposed by scientific advance. Here are some examples of this lexical periodization applied to IE:

(1) The Proto-IE lexicon, i.e. the lexicon common to all IE languages, which includes among other things grammatical words such as personal pronouns, WH- words and the like, forms by definition its earliest layer. As such it ought to be placed in the depth of Paleolithic, and be seen as reflecting the awakening and developing of human conscience and cultural activities of an already separated and independent language phylum. In fact, the differences in the lexicon of the grammatical structure shown by most language phyla should suffice to disqualify as meaningless any research aiming at reconstructing a universal monogenetic lexicon (cp. e.g. Ruhlen 1994).

(2) If IE words for ‘dying’ (coming from PIE *-mer) belong to the PIE lexicon, while for ‘burying’ there are different words in most IE languages, this must be seen as evidence that by the time ritual burying began, in Upper Paleolithic, IE groups were already differentiated. Similarly, if the name of several wild animals, among which that of the bear (PIE *rkPo-s), belong to the PIE lexicon, this means that these animals belonged to the cognitive and cultural world of IE pre-religious Paleolithic hunters. Conversely, the so called ‘noa’ names of the bear (i.e replacing the tabooed real one) in the Celtic, Germanic, Baltic and Slavic languages, all different from one another, can only indicate that by the time religious concern for hunted animals connected with totemism emerged in Upper Paleolithic (along with the earliest attestations of bear cult), IE languages were already differentiated (Alinei 1996, 2000, 2003b).

(3) Also words for typical Mesolithic inventions, such ‘bow’, ‘tar’, fishing tools, carpentry and many others, are different in each IE group, proving that by Mesolithic time IE languages were already differentiated (idem).

(4) The sharp, and now at last admitted even by traditionalists (Villar 1991), differentiation of farming terminology in the different IE languages, while absolutely unexplainable in the context of Renfrew’s NDT, provides yet another fundamental proof that the differentiation of IE languages goes back to remote prehistory.

4.4 Archaeological frontiers coincide with linguistic frontiers

The existence and the stability or mobility of frontiers between prehistoric cultures, in the different periods of prehistory, is clearly demonstrated, more than by any argumentation, by archaeological chrono-stratigraphical charts (initiated, as is known, by Gordon Childe (Childe 1925-1957, Burkitt-Childe 1932). These charts can be of significant help to historical linguists because:
(i) Depending on their chronological depth, importance and stability, these cultural frontiers can now be seen as corresponding to linguistic-family frontiers, to linguistic-group frontiers, to dialect frontiers.

(ii) The various geographical sub-areas indicated by the columns of an archaeological chart are not chosen subjectively, but their delimitation is self-generated, i.e. ‘governed’ by the very specific and exclusive sequence of cultural development, which shapes –as it were- each sub-area, identifying and distinguishing it from the others.

(iii) Each cultural sequence, corresponding to a given geographical sub-area, has thus a very distinct and strong cultural identity, which could easily be connected, depending on the period and the area involved, with a language family, a language group, or a dialect group. If, for example, the Neolithic Cardial Ware can be seen as corresponding to an already differentiated Italic group, each of its later sub-areas can be interpreted as representing a kind of ‘dialect’ differentiation from the same common ‘language’. The same can be said for the LBK in Germany, and for similar large cultural units in other areas.

(iv) As far as Europe is concerned, the picture revealed by these charts, already evident as soon as the archaeological record permits adequate geographical mapping of cultures (i.e. in the late Paleolithic and Mesolithic), is one of the formation of large ethnolinguistic cultural ‘orbits’. This picture continues also in the early Neolithic, until, beginning in the course of Neolithic, and steadily increasing in the Metal Ages, a fragmentation of each original ‘orbit’ takes place. Some periods of frontier shifting and transitional discontinuity, which are caused by the transitory expansion of elite groups in the late Metal Ages, usually come to an end in subsequent developments, with the reappearing of the previous frontiers.

All of this seems to correspond quite closely with what we should expect if one or more populations speaking one and the same language –such as the Proto-Indo-Europeans or the Proto-Uralic people- had first spread to Europe from Africa, and then had broken up into different groups (cultural ‘orbits’), as a result of their exposure first to different ecological niches, different social networks and different neighbors, then to waves of intrusive immigrants introducing agriculture and stock-raising in Neolithic, and later, in the Metal Ages, when stratified societies develop, to waves of invading elites of akin or distant groups, speaking cognate or foreign languages.

As examples (for a detailed illustration see Alinei 2000a, 2001b, 2002, 2003b, fn). I will briefly mention here:

(I) the linguistic-phylum frontier between Uralic and IE in the Baltic area coincides with the extremely stable Latvian frontier separating, from Mesolithic to Chalcolithic, the Kunda, Narva, Pit-and-Comb Ware cultures of the Uralic-speaking area in the North, from the Nemunas 1, Nemunas 2, Globular
Amphora, Corded Ware/Boat Axes and Bay Coast cultures of the IE, Baltic-speaking area in the South (1).

(II) The language frontier between French and German in Alsace coincides with the stable archaeological frontier separating the Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures of Chassey, Michelsberg, SOM, Vienne-Charente, etc. of the Celtic (now French-speaking) area, from those of the LBK, SBK, Hinkelstein, Grossgartach, Rössen cultures etc., of the now German-speaking area.

(III) The complex of language and dialect frontiers in the Western Alps, respectively between German and Neo-Latin in Switzerland, between Franco-Provençal and oïl in Switzerland, between Franco-Provençal and Occitan in France and Italy, and Gallo-Italic in Italy, coincide with the frontiers separating, in the different Alpine areas, the Cardial/Impresso-derived cultures of the Italic-speaking area from the LBK-derived cultures in Germanic Switzerland. More precisely: on the one hand Cortaillod corresponds closely to the Franco-Provençal dialects, Chassey to Occitan, Lagozza to Gallo-Italic dialects; on the other Pfyn and Rössen corresponds with the Alemannic, Swiss-German dialect area. Moreover, on the Ligurian coast and the Piedmont Alps, the frontier between Occitan and Gallo-Italic dialects corresponds to the prehistoric frontier between Chassey and the VBQ culture of the Po Valley.

(IV) On the steppes of Eastern Europe, a conspicuous and well-known Neolithic-Chalcolithic frontier separates the farming cultures of Bug-Dnestr, Tripolye Al, Tripolye All, Gorodsk-Usatovo, Corded Ware and Globular Amphora in Ukraine, from the pastoral, horse-raising and horse-riding cultures of Sursk-Dnepr, Dnepr-Donec, Seredny Stog/Chvalynsk, Yamna (kurgan!) and Catacombs, in the Pontic steppes: this is the frontier that moved Marija Gimbutas to envisage the epochal clash between the peaceful autochthonous non-IE farmers of the “Old Europe”, and the warlike intrusive IE who submerged them. In the light of the PCT and of the available linguistic evidence, instead, this frontier corresponds to an earlier linguistic phylum frontier between an already separated and flourishing eastern Slavic population of farmers to the West, and warlike Turkic pastoral nomadic groups to the East, which would be responsible, among other things, of the two innovations of horse raising and horse-riding.

Linguistically, the new interpretation has the advantage of explaining (A) the antiquity and the quantity of Turkic loanwords precisely for horse terminology in both branches of Samoyed, in the Ugric languages, as well as in Slavic languages, and (B), more generally, the quantity of Turkic agro-pastoral terms in South-Eastern European languages, including Hungarian, which would have been brought into its present area precisely by the kurgan culture (Alinei 2003a).

Interestingly, the uninterrupted continuity of Altaic steppe cultures, from Chalcolithic to the Middle Ages, can be symbolized precisely by the kurgan themselves: for on the one hand, the custom of raising kurgans on burial sites has always been one of the most characteristic features of Altaic steppe nomadic
populations, from their first historical appearance to the late Middle Ages. On the other, the Russian word *kurgan* itself is not of Russian, or Slavic, or IE, origin, but a Turkic loanword, with a very wide diffusion area in Southern Europe, which closely corresponds to the spread of the *kurgan* culture (Alinei 2000, 2003).

Notice that this phylum frontier between IE (Slavic) and Turkic in the course of history has been pushed to the East, leaving however Turkic minorities, as well as innumerable Turkic place names and other linguistic traces behind.

### 4.5 The main lines of the PCT historical reconstruction

Summarizing, the fundamental lines of the PCT historical reconstruction are:

1. The ‘arrival’ of Indo-European people in Europe and Asia must be seen as one of the major episodes of the ‘arrival’ of *Homo sapiens* in Europe and Asia from Africa, and not as an event of recent prehistory.

2. The differentiation process of IE languages from the Proto-IE common language, reconstructed by comparative linguistics, as well as that of their already separated branches (Proto-Celtic, Proto-Germanic, Proto-Italic, Proto-Balto-Slavic, Proto-Greek etc.) into their presently ‘substandard’, ‘dialect’ varieties, must have taken an extremely long time, and they must have been associated first with the varying episodes of the original migration from Africa, and then – with an increasingly faster tempo as social stratification and colonial wars began - with the varying cultural, social and political stages the new fragmented groups went through in the different settlement areas.

   For example:

   (a) The ‘mysterious arrival’ of the Celts in Western Europe, obligatory in the traditional theory as well as in the NDT – is replaced by the scenario of an early differentiation of Celts, as the westernmost IE group in Europe. Western Europe must of course have always been Celtic, and the recent prehistory of Western Europe - from the Megalithic culture through the Beaker Bell to the colonialistic La Tène – must have all been Celtic. Consequently, the duration of the colonial expansion of the Celts was much longer than thought, and its direction was from West to East and not vice versa.

   (b) The extremely successful (and sedentary) Mesolithic fishing cultures of Northern Europe must be attributed to already differentiated Celts, Germanic people and Balts, besides to Uralic people.

   (c) The continental Germanic area must have extended, before the deglaciation, from the Alps to the icecap, including what are now the Frisian islands and part of the British islands. After the deglaciation, in Mesolithic, it expanded to Scandinavia (where its earlier, ‘Mesolithic’ stage is still best preserved), and its first Neolithic appearance was the LBK. While the conspicuous fragmentation of the LBK, caused by the complexity of the recent
prehistory of the area, is reflected by the rich dialect picture of Germany and of the contiguous Germanophone countries, the much simpler prehistory, and the completely different geographic context of Scandinavia, made it possible for much of the language original characters to be preserved.

(d) What is now called the Romance area - closely corresponding to the area of the Epigravettian Paleolithic culture, of Mesolithic cultures such as Castelnovian and Sauvetterrian, and of the Impresso/Cardial culture of Neolithic - instead of representing solely the remnant of Roman imperialism, must now be seen as mainly an original Italid (or Italoid, or Ibero-Dalmatic) linguistic area, in which several proto-languages akin to Latin, besides Latin and the other Italic languages, were spoken (besides Alinei 2000, see also 1991, 1997cd, 1998b, 1998c, 2000c, 2001b, 2001c), and for the speakers of which the Latin of Rome must have been an (easy to learn) superstrate. Rumanian appears to be an intrusive language, introduced in Neolithic times into the Slavic area by Impresso/Cardial farmers coming from Dalmatia (Hamangia culture).

(e) The totally absurd thesis of the so called ‘late arrival’ of the Slavs in Europe must be replaced by the scenario of Slavic continuity from Paleolithic, and the demographic growth and geographic expansion of the Slavs can be explained, much more realistically, by the extraordinary success, continuity and stability of the Neolithic cultures of South-Eastern Europe (the only ones in Europe that caused the formation of tells) (Alinei 2000, fc.b)

4.6 A short history of the PCT

In the Nineties, three archaeologists and three linguists, all independently from one another, presented a new theory of IE origins, which is similar to the Uralic continuity, in that it claims uninterrupted continuity from Paleolithic also for IE people and languages. The three archaeologists and prehistorians are the American Homer L. Thomas (Thomas 1991), the Belgian Marcel Otte (Otte 1994, 1995), one of the world major specialists on Middle and Upper Paleolithic, and the German Alexander Häusler, a specialist in the prehistory of Central Europe (Häusler 1996, 1998, 2003). The linguists are, besides myself (Alinei 1996, 2000), Gabriele Costa (Costa 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002), and Cicero Poghirc (Poghirc 1992). Two more linguists are now working on the same line (Ballester 2000a, 2000b, 2001, Cavazza 2001), and more have expressed their general assent (Benozzo 2002, Contini 2000, Le Du 2003, Simoni Aurembou 2002).

It is therefore important to note that this theory, compared to the NDT, is the only one which has been advanced not only by archaeologists, but also by professional linguists, and therefore has been carefully checked as to its linguistic coherence, rigor and, especially, productivity.
NOTE

(1) Only at the end of Neolithic, the non-Uralic Bay Coast culture spreads to Estonia, but only to be soon reabsorbed by the local Uralic culture.

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