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## THE CRADLE OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE

### 1. Introduction

“Where stood the cradle of the Indo-European language?” In the course of time this question has been answered in many different ways. According to Devoto’s “Origine Indoeuropee” (Sansoni, Firenze, 1962, Cap. 11, p. 40) Schlegeland Curzon proposed India, Rhode Central Asia, Link Media and Armenia, Lassen Pamir, Grimm and Müller believed in an Asiatic origin, Mommsen in Mesopotamia, Pictet in Bactria, Hehn in the West; Latham proposed Volinia and Podolia, Benfey thought of the Danube, the Caspian and the Black Sea. Geiger proposed W. and S. Germany. Feit, Gimbert, Specht and Kretschmer believed in a German native country, P. Giles (Cambridge Ancient History 2, 1924, p. 28) in the Danube Basin.

Devoto mentions further Krahe, Brandenstein, Trubeckoy, Scherer, Wissmann, Thieme, Gelb.

2. We propose, from a combination of linguistic, geographical and historical evidence *the shores of Lake Balaton in Hungary* as the cradle of the Indo – European languages (at about 2000 B. C.)

The linguistic evidence consists of the well-known result that the Balto-Slavic, the German, the Celtic, the Italian, the Greek, the Illyrian, the Armenian, the Indo-Iranian in this order can be arranged *in a losed circle*; this leads to the interpretation that the peoples of Indo-European tongue have lived in a circular region, i.e. in a region *around* an inhabitable centre; as such the Eurasiatic steppe has been proposed, a not too plausible proposal. We propose Lake Balaton – it is not possible to live *upon* it, but very fit to live *around* it; here the soil is a fertile löss, which allows a very beneficial agriculture; and thus a considerable increase of population. At present the length of the Lake is 50 miles, its breadth 10 miles.

The axis of the more or less elliptic lake stretches from S. W. to N. E.; we locate the Baltic-Slavic peoples to the N. E.; we find, going round anti-clock-wise, the Germans to the N. W., the Celts to the W., the Italians to the S. W., the Greeks to the S., the Armenians and Indo-Iranians to the S. E. and the Slavic peoples to the East, with which the circle is closed. (Hittite and Tocharic have not been considered). If the increase of population can no longer be matched by the production of food from cultivable land, a

people is forced away from the shore; the direction of the exodus, say perpendicular to the direction of the shore, is determined by its location on the shore; it is easily seen, that the proposed locations are in perfect harmony with the direction of the respective exoduses required to convey the peoples to their destination, i.e. to their future known seats (the Celts to France, the Greeks to Greece, etc.). In short, if the shores of Lake Balaton are supposed to be the Indo European cradle, a *linguistic argument distributes the peoples around the lake in a way compatible with their future seats.*

3. As for the third component, the historical evidence, we picture the Indo-Europeans in the beginning as an agricultural people, tilling the soil, and also catching fish and fowl in and around Lake Balaton. (We may remember that there is no Indo-European word for the boundless sea). When by the relative shortage of cultivable land one of the shorepeoples is pressed from its seat by its neighbours, it takes to the sword and blazes its way, by preference through agricultural regions, where food can be obtained.

Let us take as an example the expedition of the Indo-Iranians from Lake Balaton through the Balkans, Greece, Anatolia, Syria and Iran to India, and ask: "What archaeological traces will this expedition have left behind?"

The answer can be found in Prof. Childe's "What Happened in History", 1941, p. 67: "The earliest Danubians seem to have been peaceful folk; weapons of war as against hunters' tools are absent from their graves. . . . an central and northern Europe we almost see the state of war of all against Ill arising as unoccupied but easily cultivable land became scarce. Elsewhere the same process is traceable, if less explicitly. In the successive layers of the settlement tells in the Balkans, Greece, Anatolia, Syria and Iran we see radical changes in culture.

Such abrupt changes are taken to symbolize the replacement of one society by another with different social traditions — in other words the conquest, expulsion or enslavement of one people by another. Such changes of population effected by war are a recurrent feature of barbarian life. . . ."

We interpret these lines as bearing upon the expedition of the Indo-Iranians from Lake Balaton to India, and ask:

*Can similar tracks of prehistoric ravage be discovered, all radiating from Lake Balaton, to the N., to the N. W., to the W., to the S. W., to the S., (to the S. E.), to the East? Maps with dots for ancient ravaged agricultural settlements may speak a clear language!*

4. This question focusses our attention on some historic — geographic characteristics of the shores of Lake Balaton. How great was the lake 2000 B. C.? Where should excavations on the shores be undertaken? Along which paths did the expeditions to the N., to the W., to the S. take place, along which *ravaged agricultural settlements* can be detected by excavation? Or, can the present study contribute in the organisation of the archeologic knowledge already available?

Summary: The shores of Lake Balaton in Hungary are indicated as the Indo-European cradle; the arrangement of the I. E. branches as required by their linguistic relationship coincides completely with the arrangement required by the geography of their future seats (Balto-Slavonic in the N. E., German in the N., Celtic in the W., Italian in the S. W., Greek-Illyrian in the S., Armenian, Indo-Iranian in the S. E.).

Excavations in the settlement tells in the Balcans, Greece, Anatolia, Syria and Iran reveal the ruin of agricultural peoples, victims of a war-like tribe on its expedition from Lake Balaton to Iran and India. Other expeditions radiating from Lake Balaton may be discovered by excavation of the remains of similar agricultural settlements, *ravaged* in a similar way.