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Indo-Europeans : Urheimat and Folkgeist issue

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1 INDO-EUROPEANS: URHEIMAT AND FOLKGEIST ISSUE

The concept of the PIE cultural area is crucial for the existence of IECM. According to Antalik (2005), the comparison of any cultural phenomena of geographically (and hence culturally) secluded areas needs to be justified by an ontological platform, on which a comparativist is entitled to hypothesize that he *compares the comparable*. In the case of IECM the concept of PIE Urheimat forms such a justifying platform. It gives an IE mythologist a license to relate myths produced by IE speaking groups of different historical and geographical location, referring to their common prehistoric origin (Cigán 2009).

Therefore, from the methodological as well as ontological point of view, the axiom of prehistoric existence of PIE cultural-linguistic homeland still counts as a basic factor legitimizing the existence of IECM. It is not to be refused as a racist myth, as Anthony correctly observed (Anthony 2007:89), nor as a manifestation of crypto-romantic sentiment (Cigán 2009). Quite the contrary, it can be supported by reliable scientific, for instance linguistic argumentation:

The fact that so many languages of Europe and south-west Asia show widespread agreements in their grammatical structure and vocabulary can be explained ... only by the assumption that all spring from a common basic language, which we call Indo-European, and are all nothing other than independently developed variants of this original language, the *Ursprache*. (Szemerényi 1999:31)

Just this kind of linguistic argument alone seems to be generally sufficient. In prehistory, due to the specific conditions, the fact of language unity alone often meant the cultural homogeneity of a certain speech community. This assumption will be evaluated below, together with other factors of possible prehistoric

unification of PIE cultural area. So far the nature of supporting argumentation can be outlined by another Szemerényi remark: *...in earlier times society was itself much smaller, more united, and, owing to measures of central control, much more strongly cohesive than today, the language (together with culture) also was much more unified.* (Szemerényi 1999:29-30)

As for the Urheimat's geographic localization, in this book the concept of Pontic-Caspian steppes (Mallory 1989, Anthony & Ringe 2015) is held. Despite the emergence of competing approaches (Gamgrelidze & Ivanov 1995, Renfrew 1990, Bouckaert et al. 2012), multidisciplinary argumentation (Anthony & Ringe 2015) still makes the traditional Pontic-Caspian hypothesis the most valid and sustainable of all the solutions proposed so far.

Only one comment should be added to the everlasting controversy about the existence of PIE homeland as well as the possibility of diachronic transmission of its cultural patterns to historical times. Generally, existing cultural areas do not produce culturally encapsulated *worlds for themselves* in a strong Humboldtian sense. Local variations dwell only on the surface layers of otherwise universal cognition, as a product of a child's enculturation to certain locally varied culture. Therefore, the existence of characteristic features of any cultural area is only temporal, limited to a certain segment of time and space. Their possible endurance fully depends on the stability of historical and ecological circumstances which participated in the process of their emergence. Only by their stability is ensured the continuity in the patterns of enculturation, leading to intergenerational transmission of more or less sound patterns of thinking and behavior.

This brings implications for a proper understanding of the concept of IE cultural identity. There are no intrinsic ways of its diachronic cultural transmission. As it was introduced in the previous paragraph, all the cultural uniqueness beyond biologically inherited universality of AMH is transmitted only through the external process of enculturation. There is nothing like "IE mentality" transmitted mystically via language, mythology, or "by blood".

Of course, by this anti-romantic turn is neither discredited the existence of unique cultural patterns of prehistoric area of PIE dialects, nor the possibility of their diachronic transmission to some historical group of some later IE dialect. Quite the contrary! There is only a need, instead of mentioned esoteric ideas of romanticism, to search for different sources and causes of this cultural exclusivity as well as its diachronic stability.