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LANGUAGE CONTACTS IN THE CAUCASUS AND THE NEAR EAST

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I confess I do not quite understand the title of the symposium: "When Worlds Collide." Webster's Dictionary explains "collide" as "to strike or dash against each other, to meet in shock; to meet in opposition or antagonism;" and the Oxford Dictionary explains "collision" as "violent encounter of moving body with another or with fixed object." A collision of worlds one envisages as an Armageddon of huge clashing armed forces. However, I do not believe in collision of worlds in the primitive and ancient societies (what kind of worlds? Ethnic? Cultural? Linguistic?). Alexander's Graeco-Macedonian army *traversed* the Ancient Oriental world, but the Greek and Oriental *worlds* did not *clash*; Alexander's conquest was followed by a slow and peaceful process of Occidental - Oriental contacts. An Attila, a Jenghiz Khan, a Hitler all belong to typologically later periods. If we are to speak of ancient mankind, a more suitable title would have been "When Worlds Come into Contact." Appropriately, I have been requested to read a paper on "Language Contacts in the Caucasus and the Near East." But language contact occurs always as the result of extralinguistic factors; therefore, if we are to study the meaning of language contact, we must also understand the historical, cultural and anthropological contacts which may be involved.

Ethnic contacts are of different kinds, *e.g.*:

(1) Total annihilation of the local inhabitants by an invading ethnic entity. To make such an event possible, both the level of development and the numbers of the contacting populations must be quite incommensurable. Obviously, such an event cannot occur in a world still living under archaic conditions.

(2) Total displacement of the local inhabitants to another territory by the immigrating ethnic entity. Such an event is also less than probable in an archaic world

and, besides, to achieve such a displacement, one has to have at disposal sufficient extra space to which the weaker ethnic group could be displaced.

(3) Partial infiltration of a new ethnic entity, while the old one continues in residence in the same territory. This, as I think, was the typical case during the epoch of ancient mankind. The local population could either absorb the newcomers also linguistically, or it could adopt their language; whether the one or the other event occurred, depends on strictly definable historical circumstances. The biological features of the population, in any case, change but very slightly.

I should like to draw the attention of my colleagues to the very frequent misuse of the migration hypothesis. One is apt to explain by population change any, or at least any major change in the pottery which is diagnostic of an archaeological culture; too little weight is sometimes ascribed to inner development and to spontaneous changes in technology as well as in fashions. But as I have just stated, a total population change practically never occurred in antiquity, and even partial population change should not be hypothesized without very good grounds.

But it is exactly major population movements, *viz.* migrations of tribes and peoples in a body over thousands and thousands of miles, that have been commonly assumed as the reason for the spread of linguistic families. Such migrations have been imagined on the pattern and scale of the Great Migration of Peoples during the early Middle Ages, or of the invasion of Turko-Mongol tribes toward the West in the early second millennium A.D. The analogy, however, does not hold water. Thus, neither the early Indo-Europeans nor the early Semites were nomads (the latter fact having been established by the work of Pelio Fronzaroli). Stock rearing was important to both, but their economy can by no means be compared to that of the early Turko-Mongols. As to the Great Migration of the early Middle Ages, it did not bring about a biological and linguistic change in the Western European population, with the only exception of England.*¹

In the nineteenth and twentieth century it was mainly the linguists who dealt in migrations, but it should be obvious that a migration is primarily a problem for the historian. In order to postulate that a migration has taken place, one has to answer a number of questions that are essentially historical, as follows.

First question: What was the reason of and the impulse to the migration? To my knowledge, there have been, in the Ancient World, only two reasons for mass migration: (a) catastrophic drought on a major scale; in the Mediterranean region such was the case in the sixth-fifth millennium B.C., when the proto-civilization of Catalhuyuk etc. was brought to an end, and in the late third-early second millennium B.C., when contacts were apparently lost between the Fertile Crescent and south Arabia; and (b), a dramatic growth in food production leading to a fall in child mortality and a rise in the population increase above the usual much less than 1% *per annum*. A migration is induced by a relative scarcity of land resources. This applies to the agricultural and agricultural-*cum*-stock raising tribes at the period of the Neolithic "revolution," and, in a quite different context, to the period of the Great Greek Colonization. The spread of the Indo-European speaking tribes - I would not use the term migration - was apparently due to the rise in the production of vegetables, milk and meat under the favorable conditions of the deciduous Eastern European forests in the moist fourth and third millennia B.C.

Second question, or, better, the second group of questions: Did the migration involve the whole population or only the males (the latter was the case of the Cimmeric-Scythian migrations)? Did one walk on foot or did one use some means of transportation, and if the latter case is assumed, what were the means? Were they actually available?

Let me cite an example. In one of the latest variants of their theory of Indo-European migrations, Vyacheslav Ivanov and Thomas Gamkrelidze suggest that the Indo-Iranians, whose supposed *Ur-Heimat* was in Iranian Azerbaijan, passed to Middle Asia by ships over the Caspian. However shipping on the Caspian is not attested until very much later, and necessary timber is nowhere available along the coast, except for the inaccessible subtropical forests of Talish and Mazandaran, out of the way of any possible major migration. The mountain passes across the Greater Caucasus although accessible to groups of pedestrians, or of riders without women (like the Cimmerians and the Alani), were not suited for crossing in wagons on primitive wheels, with families and household goods.

Third group of questions: What kind of population did one meet in the path of the migration? What happened to that population? Was it massacred? Was it ousted? Was it assimilated? Or, perhaps, did it itself assimilate the newcomers, culturally and biologically, although adopting the language of the newcomers?

Unless these questions can be satisfactorily answered, I should refuse to discuss any tribal or popular migration *en masse*.

What actually happens in history, can be illustrated by a linguistic 'migration' which occurred in historical times, namely, the spread of the Turkic languages. The late eminent Russian anthropologist L.V. Oshanin studied the stability of certain genes in the different Turkic speaking populations. It is well known that in a biologically stable population the recessive and the dominant genes will be maintained in the same proportion. The first historically attested Turkic tribes were anthropologically Mongoloid and hence had the typical Mongoloid feature of the epicanthic fold of the eyelid, depending upon a dominant gene. If the movement of the Turkic languages from the borders of modern China to those of modern Turkey were actually a mass population movement, then the percentage of the epicanthus in the speakers of Turkish, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Uzbek, Kazakh and Qyrghyz would be approximately identical. The actual measurements, however, show the retention percentage of epicanthic fold to be, in males, 51% for the Qyrghyz, 22% for the Kazakhs, 11% for the Uzbeks, 6% for the Turkmens, and below 2% for the Azerbaijanis; and in females, 83% for the Qyrghyz, 53% for the Kazakhs, 18% for the Uzbeks, and 10% for the Turkmens. For Turks, the retention percentage for both sexes tends toward zero. This means, of course, that the Turkic language was adopted each time by a certain local population from the newcomers, and was then passed on to the next population; intermarriage of the local and immigrating population, and inclusion of local tribes in the general nomadic ethnic entity, also played their role. The farther West the wave of migration passed, the less it included individuals who were bearers of the original genes. Moreover, Oshanin could show that the modern Turkic-speaking Turkmens, - as far as biological features were concerned, and discounting the above mentioned 10% of gene retention, - differed in no way from the Scythian (Iranian) speaking Massagetae who lived in Turkmenia 25 centuries earlier.

The same must be true of the spread of Indo-European languages, especially if we take into account the fact that, as distinct from the Turks, the Indo-European speakers were not nomads.

This 'relay-race' type spread of languages and linguistic families must be regarded as typical: catastrophic invasions with complete change of population being rather unusual in history. It is only by the 'relay-race' type spread of languages that we can explain why the blond Norwegian or Lithuanian speaks an Indo-European language just as do the very black-skinned Singhalese of Sri Lanka. We can safely relegate to the realm of myth the masses of Indo-Iranians crossing the Caspian in ships from Iranian Azerbaijan to Turkmenia, or, for that matter, any simultaneous mass emigration of an entire Indo-European speaking population from one country to another. The same is true of any other agricultural tribe: a peasant does not leave his land unless driven by dire necessity.

It is my considered opinion that the Indo-European language speakers never left their homeland, wherever it may have lain. What happened, was the constant spread of an increasing population to neighbouring peripheral territories, where the aborigines were usually less numerous and often were on a lower level of production culture; the new settlers intermarried and intermixed with the locals, a common culture and a common (Indo-European) language arose, and was spread by the same procedure further onward.

Another misconception must also be touched upon. This is the misconception of a *Herrenvolk* forcing its language upon a conquered population. This is something which cannot be substantiated historically. None of the ancient empires forced their language upon the conquered people. The Near East emerged after its conquest by the Assyrian and later the Babylonian empire linguistically united, but the common language was not Akkadian of the conquerors but the Aramaic, and from the dominion of Urartu Eastern Anatolia emerged Armenian speaking; the common language of all peoples in the eastern part of the Roman Empire became Greek, not Latin; and even if 'Vulgar Latin' became the language of the western part of the Empire, it was not because the Roman conquerors forced their language upon the aboriginals, but because participation in the Roman culture was a desired material asset. The same is true of Arabic: Arabic was acquired with Islam and the Islamic culture; the Arab masters taxed their subjects higher if they did not embrace Islam but they never did force Arabic upon Christians, Sabians, or Jews. Note that the number of Arabs who entered Egypt in the 7th century was merely about 12,000, but this did not prevent the Egyptians adopting, with time, the Arabic language while retaining their anthropological type and, to a great extent, their way of life.

A language may spread without appreciable population movement. Thus during the twentieth century the borders of Uzbek speaking territory have constantly spread at the expense of Tajik speaking territory. The reason for the spread of a language may be different: As for instance, the need for wider communications, especially in a multilanguage environment, or at a period of more intensive trade relations in a specific territory; sometimes merely the fact that a language was easy to learn decided which language was to get predominance (as Aramaic in the Near East, or Turkic in Middle East Asia).

However, as a general rule we may state that at least a minority of speakers of the new language *must* arrive in the new territory, in order that a new language should spread to it. Such an infiltration, however, does not necessarily leave any important traces in the racial features, in the archaeology of the region, nor even in official texts which may continue to be couched in the traditional official language (Akkadian, Urartian, Hieroglyphic Luwian, etc.); only catastrophic invasions leave clear archaeological traces, but such invasions, as mentioned above, were not frequent. A slower movement and longer periods of settlement can be traced through onomastics, toponyms and hydronyms.

Language territory cannot in principle be unreservedly identified with the territory of one certain archaeological culture. Especially in the archaic periods, with little communication between tribes, different archaeological cultures can form within one dialect continuum. Such cultures would not perhaps be quite dissimilar. Language being the most important medium for the transfer of cultural features, it stands to reason that inside one major archaeological culture we should expect one language or at least one dialect continuum. However, let us remember that Akkadian and Sumerian cannot, in the absence of written sources, be sorted out from archaeological sources alone; and the same is true of the Hurrians and Semites of Upper Mesopotamia in the second millennium B.C. Thus, the existence, at a certain time and in a certain territory, of a major more or less homogenous archaeological culture may be an approximate indication of a continuum of interrelated dialects, but is not a sure proof of its existence.

Now I turn to how I envisage the spread of the Indo-European dialects in antiquity. This is only a subjective opinion: one *has* to make hypothetic constructions when one thinks, but it is not something I should stake my head on.

The triumphant spread of the Indo-European languages over most of the Eurasian continent is due, no doubt, to the fact that their original speakers had a more viable economy than their neighbours, with relatively low infant mortality. This must have been an economy based on high grade agriculture and animal breeding, which supplied milk and meat food for the population in relative plenty. Let us recall that the mass of Sumerians and Akkadians had no meat or milk in their daily diet. For me, that means that the Indo-European speakers must have been the descendants of the first agriculturists and cattle-breeders in Europe. Were it otherwise, it would be another language which would spread all over these great spaces. This, for me, points to the Balkans and the Danube basin as the *original* home of the Indo-Europeans; only later some of them must have moved into the region between the Elba and the Vistula.

It seems established that grain cultivation and cattle breeding reached Macedonia and Thrace from Asia Minor at some moment in the seventh millennium B.C. It is the palaeobotanists and palaeozoologists who have the word here; but if this is actually the case, then the Catal-huyuk proto-urban farmer culture of the eighth-seventh millennia B.C. in Asia Minor might have been the homeland of pre-Proto-Indo-Europeans *et al.* This, of course, is no more than a guess with no necessary validity. The Catal-huyuk culture perished by the sixth millennium with the beginning of a prolonged drought period.

Only in one case is the identification of an Indo-European group with a certain archaeological culture possible with nearly complete probability: The Srubnaya, a

Bronze culture in the steppe and forest-steppe regions of Russia and the Ukraine (second half of the second millennium B.C. - early first millennium), as well as its neighboring and kindred Andronovo culture extending from Southern Siberia to the borders of Iran and Afghanistan. These archaeological cultures can confidently be regarded as Indo-Iranian or, more probably, North-Eastern Iranian. The other archaeological cultures of Eastern Europe between the late fourth millennium and the early first millennium have been variously identified with different early Indo-European speakers. The identification perhaps most popular in the West is that of Marija Gimbutas; it is not so popular in my country, because our archaeologists feel she is not quite *au courant* with the newer Soviet finds. There is a number of other identifications; I shall, at random, stake upon the unpublished identification of a young Ukrainian scholar, Stanislav Kaira; it is quite plausible and in no way inferior to any other suggested identification, and may give a representative view of how the problem stands.

According to Kaira, the Yamnaya, or Kurgan culture of the fourth - early second millennia B.C., situated between the Dniester and the Urals, represents mainly the ancestors of the languages of the eastern Indo-Europeans (Greeks, Phrygians, Thracians, Armenians, and Indo-Iranians); to the North-East of it, the Afanasievo culture represents the Tocharians; the Usatovo, the Middle Dnieper culture, as well as the *Schnur-Keramik* and related cultures of Eastern Europe represent the Balto-Slavic, Germanic, Celtic, and Italic speaking tribes.

Also Ivanov and Gamkrelidze reconstruct the habitat of the early Indo-Europeans more or less in the same way; the difference, however, is that they bring them into Eastern Europe from Eastern Anatolia and Iranian Azerbaijan, and that by different devious routes, and in such a way that linguistically closely related languages are assigned different routes, while linguistically remote languages are supposed to have followed one and the same route.

A long sojourn of speakers of a certain language in a given territory means usually that (a) one can *approximately* identify a certain archaeological culture as created by the speakers of that language, alone or jointly with other ethnic groups; (b) one can identify substratum words borrowed from the language in question into the later language or languages of that area; (c) one can identify toponyms or hydronyms borrowed from the same substratum language; (d) the way of migration can approximately be traced by migration of archaeological artifacts which have a diagnostic value for the archaeological culture in question. On the strength of these indicators, one can confidently say that Indo-European languages have not been spoken in the Near East before the arrival of the Hittito-Luwians (probably in the third millennium B.C.), the Proto-Armenians (late in the second millennium B.C.)², and the Indo-Iranians (probably during the second millennium B.C.). Ivanov and Gamkrelidze themselves concede that their hypothetic Indo-Europeans in Eastern Anatolia and Iranian Azerbaijan cannot be identified with any particular archaeological culture, and the tentative identifications with the Tell-Halaf and the Shulaveri-Shomutepe cultures (the latter in Transcaucasia) are by no means convincing. There are no toponyms or hydronyms of early Indo-European origin in Eastern Anatolia; as to the hydronyms quoted by Ivanov and Gamkrelidze for the peninsula of Asia Minor, I cannot see why they could not be early Hittito-Luwian. As to words borrowed from Proto-Indo-

European into Near Eastern languages, the authors quote I.-E. **woi-no-* 'wine' and Semitic **wain-* *do.*, Kartvelian **wino-* *do.* and also Georgian *venaq-* 'vineyard' allegedly from an I.-E. **weinag-* (p. 881); but on p. 649 the same I.-E. gloss dwindles down to a late Southern Slavic word-compound *vinyaga* 'wine-berry,' i.e. 'grape' which cannot by any stretch of imagination be responsible for Georgian *venaq-*. However, **wain-* is only Western Semitic, not Common Semitic or Common Afrasian, and hence may have been borrowed from Mycenaean Greek; actual Indo-European-Kartvelian isoglosses will be mentioned below.

Furthermore, the authors cite Hattic *aia-* 'to give' as an allegedly I.-E. borrowing. Since the word belongs to the main semantic nucleus to which foreign words are very seldom borrowed, I prefer to regard the Hattic word as *Sirene des Gleichklangs*, and the same is true of Hattic *urai* 'well, spring' and *Uret* 'goddess of water and springs,' allegedly from Indo-European.

Also quite improbable is the suggestion that Elamite borrowed from Proto-Indo-European its anaphoric pronouns and some other words which are, with one or two exceptions, misquotations anyway. Elamite has now been safely classed together with Dravidian by McAlpin, and also the words in question have received satisfactory native etymologies. This is also true of Hurro-Urartian *ag-* 'to lead,' and *ass-* 'to be placed, to sit;' both have good Eastern Caucasian etymologies and need not be regarded as borrowings. Moreover, the verb *ass-*, being Common Hurro-Urartian, i.e. dating back to about the fourth millennium B.C., cannot be borrowed from Indo-Iranian; and if borrowed from Common Indo-European, it would have been represented as **es-*, not *ass-*! Urartian *burgana* means 'pole,' not 'fortress,' and has a satisfactory Eastern Caucasian etymology. Hurrian *kade* 'barley' represents the phoneme *k*, not **q* (spelled *k* or *h*) and cannot be identified with I.-E. **Hat-*, etc., etc.

Ivanov and Gamkrelidze cite also a number of glosses which allegedly are borrowed from Semitic into Proto-Indo-European. I have already analyzed these glosses elsewhere and shown that they () do not satisfy the necessary phonetic and/or semantic requirements; in a few cases they may be wandering *Kulturwörter* having reached *some* Indo-European areas but certainly not Common Indo-European. Still less reliable are the alleged borrowings into Common Indo-European from Sumerian, like Indo-European **gwou-* (or, according to the authors, even **k'ou* 'cow') from Sumerian **gud* 'cattle; bull' and simultaneously from Egyptian *ng.w*, i.e. [**naga'-w-*], to quote only one example out of six quite impossible etymologies.

Then we come to the question whether there exist archaeological traces of any mass movement from Anatolia and Azerbaijan towards the East and North-East - towards India, Central Asia and Southern Siberia, and thence to Eastern Europe (the Yamnaya, or Kurgan Culture). Such a movement is postulated by Ivanov and Gamkrelidze. Space does not allow me to dwell upon this point in more detail; it is sufficient to state that no such traces going back to the fourth-second millennia B.C. are at all attested; on the contrary, all evidence points to popular movements in the opposite direction, i.e. from Eastern Europe towards the East, from Southern Siberia towards the South, etc., etc.

We must unavoidably come to the conclusion that the Proto-Indo-Europeans did never dwell in Eastern Anatolia and Iranian Azerbaijan, nor anywhere else in the Near East, at least not in the fifth to third millennia B.C.

Now we can turn to the positive evidence that we have at our disposal concerning the linguistic areas in the Ancient Near East.

The oldest linguistic area is that of the so-called 'Banana'-language, also known as Proto-Tigridian. It appears in a few late third millennium B.C. personal names from Gasur at the site of Yorghan-tepe near Kirkuk in Eastern Iraq, east of the Tigris, and in a number of borrowed cultural words in Sumerian, like *urudu* 'metal, copper,' *apin* 'plough,' and others, as well as in a number of names of deities, like Inana, Ishkhara, Kubaba, Zababa, Aia, Bunene, Igigi and others. The language was certainly extinct by 2000 B.C.; its kinship connections are unknown.

Next comes Sumerian. The Sumerian language seems to have been brought to Southern Mesopotamia presumably in the early fourth millennium B.C., and apparently from the East. The pronunciation of Sumerian words is known only from Akkadian transcriptions in Sumero-Akkadian vocabularies and in Sumerian borrowings into Akkadian. However - as I think I was able to prove (work in print) - the current pronunciation of Akkadian is the result of uncritical transposition to it of Hebrew and partly Arabic pronunciations of the Common Semitic phonemes, and the real phonetics of Akkadian was very far from the conventional. This means that also the Akkadian transcriptions of Sumerian words are, as of today, practically worthless until deeper investigations have been made. It is fairly certain that the Sumerian phonetic system was very complicated, reminding one of, e.g., Eastern Caucasian. No kinship connection between Sumerian and any other language in the world has been established.

The Sumerians lived in modern Southern Iraq in a peaceful cohabitation with the Eastern Semites, or Akkadians. No archaeological traces of ethnical conflicts in Southern Mesopotamia between the years 4000 B.C. and 2000 B.C. have been observed, although local wars were of course waged, but regardless of the language spoken by the adversaries. Both peoples shared the common denomination of 'blackheads' (Sumerian *sang-ngiga*, Akkadian *salmat qaqqadi*). The whole population of Southern Mesopotamia, after a prolonged period of bilingualism, changed over to Akkadian at a date which has been variously estimated, from ca. 2500 B.C. to ca. 1500 B.C.

The Semites form a linguistic family inside the Afrasian, or Afro-Asiatic linguistic phylum. The Semites were living in Western Asia south of the Asianic and the Armenian Taurus and west of the Zagros, in a territory probably including the Arabian Peninsula, at least since the fourth or even the fifth millennium B.C. The analysis of the Common Semitic vocabulary by Pelio Fronzaroli has shown that the Proto-Semites were neolithic and chalcolithic agriculturalists and animal breeders.

Since it has been proved that Semitic is related to the African linguistic families Egyptian, Cushitic (and probably Omotic), Berbero-Libyan and Chadic, the question of the original homeland of the whole phylum arises. I had suggested the eastern part of the Republic of Sudan and Western Sahara, but weighty arguments have been brought against this hypothesis. Another such hypothesis is that of Alexander Militarev. According to him, the Proto-Afrasians were very early agriculturalists acquainted with certain metals and living in an environment of half desert and steppe, half Mediterranean maquis and forest-land. On glottochronological grounds he dates Proto-Afrasian to ca. ten-eleven thousand B.C. and identifies their original habitat with the area of the Natufian mesolithic culture in Palestine. The Natufians, however, had

still no agriculture, and the economic picture drawn by Militarev's proto-language reconstruction points rather to the seventh or eighth, not the eleventh millennium B.C. According to Militarev, the speakers of the 'African' Afrasian languages left Western Asia during the sixth millennium period of drought and passed to Africa partly via Suez, and partly via the Bab al-Mandab. In both cases the groups of migrants could not have been very numerous, although their languages were to be adopted by a great number of people - of the Ethiopian local black race (the Cushites), the Negroid local black race (the Chadians), the Mediterranean local white race (the Egyptians) and the Atlanto-Baltic local white race (the Berbero-Lybian and the Guanche in the Canaries). As an argument in favor of a Western Asiatic origin of all Afrasian speakers Militarev adduces the existence of Berber - East-Caucasian, and Cushitic - West Caucasian specific isoglosses; whether or not the isoglosses in question are of better quality than that postulated by Ivanov and Gamkrelidze for Proto-Indo-Europeans and the languages of Ancient Near East, remains to be seen.³

The Elamites, inhabiting the whole southern part of present-day Iran during the third and second millennia B.C. - probably also earlier - seem to be linguistically akin to the Brahui in modern Baluchistan (Afghanistan and Pakistan) and further with the Dravidians of Southern India. The Elamite - and the possibly related Kassite language - gradually gave way during the later second and the first millennia B.C. to the speakers of Western Iranian languages of the Indo-European linguistic family. No archaeological evidence of ethnic conflicts exists.

The next linguistic family to be considered is the Northern Caucasian. Formerly Caucasian was divided into three branches: North-Western with Abkhazian, Adygh, Ubykh, etc., Southern or Kartvelian with Svan, Georgian, Mingrelian and Ch'an and North-Eastern with Chechen, Avaro-Andian, Lezghian etc. After the work done by S.A. Starostin and S.A. Nikolaev it appears evident that North-Caucasian is a superfamily divided into two families, the North-Eastern (or Eastern Caucasian), and the North-Western (or Western Caucasian); while Kartvelian does not belong to the Caucasian superfamily at all but constitutes a separate family of its own. The typology of Proto-Kartvelian word structure is strikingly similar to that of Proto-Indo-European. There exist also a number of Proto-Kartvelian - Proto-Indo-European lexical isoglosses. What is especially important, they do not belong to the cultural vocabulary so often easily borrowed, but to the nuclear vocabulary, as *e.g.* **dew-*: **dw-* 'to lie, to put,' **lag-*: **lg-* 'to lay, to plant,' **gen-*: **gn-* 'to understand, to hear,' **zixl* 'blood,' **m-k'erd* 'breast' **k'rep-* 'to pluck, to gather (fruit),' **brg* 'strong, sturdy, large' and a number of others which an Indo-European scholar will immediately recognize. Therefore, in spite of the fact that such eminent experts as G.A. Klimov and Th.V. Gamkrelidze regard these isoglosses as borrowings, I am inclined to regard them as evidence of a collateral kinship between Proto-Indo-European and Proto-Kartvelian going back to a common Proto-Kartvelo-Indo-European dialect continuum.

The Georgians themselves, including the Georgian linguists, regard their language as autochthonous. The whole Ivanov-Gamkrelidze theory shows a picture of Indo-European languages moving in a gigantic rotating movement with immovable Georgian as the axis of the giant wheel. But note that also the Armenians and even the Azerbaijanis tend to regard their mother tongue as autochthonous and immovable since early antiquity. If the Georgian language has never budged from its place in Eastern

and Central Transcaucasia, then it is truly unique in the world. I think it more probable that the first speakers of Kartvelian arrived from outside, and namely (since no connection between Catal-Huyuk in early Asia Minor and the later archaeological cultures of Georgia can be traced), from the North. As a probable archaeological nucleus one might regard the Maikop culture of the North Caucasus, and the newly found tumuli in Kakhetia, Georgia. The date of the Maikop culture (second half of the third millennium B.C.) fits the glottochronology of Kartvelian. Although formerly the Maikop culture was regarded as isolated, now it can be regarded as having certain features in common not only with the Near Eastern cultures, but also with the Pre-Proto-European cultures of the third millennium B.C. in Southern Europe (Megalithic and others). The Northwest-Caucasian dolmens do not differ from the European Megalithic ones.

The speakers of Northern Caucasian languages inhabit at present a very limited mountain zone in the Greater Caucasus and belong to a specific local European race - the Caucasic one (also the Ossetes whose language is the descendant of the Scythian dialect of the Alani, *i.e.* North-Eastern Iranian, - belong to the same local race). However, some time ago, conjointly with S.A. Starostin, I seem to have proved that also Hurro-Urartian belonged to the Eastern Caucasian linguistic family, having its place between Chechen, Andian and Lezghian. This does not tell the non-expert very much. But if you put a compass leg, on a map of the Caucasus, in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, then in about a hundred miles due NE you will find the Kodori pass leading into Chechnia; just west of the Kodori pass are the sources of the Andian-Koisu river, whose valley North of the Greater Caucasus is inhabited by the Andians; and the different Lezghian tribes live on both sides of the Greater Caucasus, south of a line due East of Tbilisi. Supposing the Proto-Chechen, the Proto-Andian and the Proto-Lezghian languages were spoken in about the same region some five or six thousand years ago, this means that the homeland of the Hurro-Urartians would be to the South of the Chechens and the Andians and to the West of the Lezghians, somewhere between modern Tbilisi and the mountains to the east of it. Of course, the suggested homeland may have lain also farther to the northeast, or the southeast, or the southwest.

According to Starostin, the Caucasian languages are related to the Ket on the Yenisey River and to Sino-Tibetan. This seems to be a rather mad statement, but coming from a linguist of the stature of Starostin, cannot be just disregarded. Anyway, it is not improbable that the Caucasian languages, like the other language groups in the region, have been imported from the North or North-East at an early date. They do not belong to the Nostratic phylum (with Indo-European, Kartvelian, Fenno-Ugrian and Elamo-Dravidian). The glottochronological date for Proto-Caucasian is well beyond the 4000 B.C. mark, perhaps 5000 B.C.

Margarita Khachikyan in Erevan has shown that the infiltration of the Hurrian speakers to the foothills and the plains of the Near East went on in several discrete waves during the late third and the first half of the second millennium B.C., coming apparently from the North-East (*hurri-le* seems to have meant 'Easterners' or 'North-Easterners', *c.f.* Hurrian *hurri* 'morning'). The northern limit of Hurrian is unknown, but it certainly lay far up in eastern Anatolia or even in Transcaucasia. The western limit of the Hurrian language area lay certainly West of the Taurus, the eastern

somewhere in the Zagros. The homeland of the Urartian was, in the late second and early first millennia B.C., around Lake Van and east of it in Eastern Anatolia. It is perhaps unavoidable to regard Eastern Anatolia (and Transcaucasia?) as the region of the Hurro-Urartian language before its descent to the foothills and into the plains, *i.e.*, in the third millennium B.C. There is good reason to believe that in the third millennium B.C. the Hurro-Urartian language zone more or less coincided with the area of the Eastern Anatolian Early Bronze culture. The Soviet archaeologists call it the Kur-Araxes culture: its center is thought to have lain in Transcaucasia, and its northern frontier crossed the Greater Caucasus at Kodori and farther to the East.⁴ This actually leaves no space here for the Indo-Europeans. Also Iranian Azerbaijan was inhabited at that time (and later) by a people called the Qutians. The term **quti* coincides with the name of the little modern Lezghian people Udi (< **qut i*) living on the frontier between Georgia and Azerbaijan. We know very little about the Qutian language, but most probably it also was Eastern Caucasian.

Caucasian languages (in the proper sense, *i.e.* not including the Kartvelian) seem also to have been the substratum for Hittite-Luwian. This is fairly certain for the Hittites (and the Palaians of Paphlagonia). Here the substratum was Hattic which, after the recent work of I.M. Dunajevskaja, V.G. Ardzimba and V.V. Ivanov, we can fairly certainly consider as a Western Caucasian language. The certainty is perhaps not so cast-iron as in the case of the eastern Caucasian origin of Hurro-Urartian, but the evidence is not to be discarded, and anyway, even *a priori* Hattic could hardly be anything else but Western Caucasian.

But the Hattic linguistic area did not stretch beyond the Halys (Kizil-Irmak), and the substratum of the Luwians and the rest of Asia Minor, including Cyprus, Lemnos etc., - was apparently Eastern Caucasian. At the time of working with Starostin on Hurro-Urartian I had a look through the Etruscan material. I was struck by the typological similarity between the Etruscan and the Hurrian grammar structures; it was obvious that the Etruscologists were so long unable to solve the riddle of the Etruscan grammar because they were hampered by their Indo-European background. This fall Starostin and his collaborator V.E. Orel read a paper postulating a material kinship between Etruscan and the Hurro-Urartian branch of the Eastern Caucasian linguistic family, both in vocabulary and in morphology. In their opinion the Etruscan language was one of the languages of the aboriginal population of Asia Minor, its speakers having emigrated to the Central Mediterranean long before the Peoples of the Sea movement in the late second millennium B.C.

While we are speaking about Eastern Caucasian, and Hurrian in particular, it would be appropriate to touch upon the problem of the so-called "Mesopotamian Aryan." Ivanov and Gamkrelidze greatly overrate the value of the existing evidence on "Mesopotamian Aryan;" they even suggest that the Indo-Iranians dwelled in Iranian Azerbaijan as early as the fourth-third millennium. As proof they bring the supposed kinship of Sumerian *si-si* 'horse' with the Indo-Iranian name of the horse in its *sat3m*-form (*asva-* < **ek'uo-*). I just cannot believe in the existence of *sat3m*-forms already in the *Ur-Heimat*, allegedly in Anatolia - Azerbaijan; and anyway the connection of *si-si* even to *asva-* (not **ek'uo-*) is a *Sirene des Gleichklangs*, if ever there was one.

According to the common opinion, there are Indo-Aryan (allegedly "Mesopotamian Aryan") glosses in the handbook of horse-training written by one

Mitannian Kikkuli for the Hittite kings in about the thirteenth century B.C., and there is a list of Indo-Aryan gods: Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and the Nasatyas, invoked as guarantors of a treaty between the Hittite king Suppiluliumas I and the Mitannian pretender Shattiwazza. It has been pointed out as important in this connection that Mitra is a god of treaties.

As to Kikkuli's handbook, the above is substantially correct; whether the glosses are actually Indo-Aryan is, as we shall see, a moot question. As to the Hittite-Mitannian treaty, the statement in the form cited is wrong, as very justly pointed out by Annelies Kammenhuber. She also noted that all extant 'Aryan' glosses in second millennium cuneiform texts are not actually Aryan but manifestly transmitted by Hurrian speakers.

The list of deities in the treaty is very long indeed, and the so-called 'Aryan' gods are enumerated very far down the list (the deities being listed according to their importance, and the list including Hattic, Hittite-Luwian, Sumero-Akkadian and Hurrian gods). The 'Aryan' gods are not listed on a par with the others: their names are included in a Hurrian quotation, as follows: *Mitra-ssi-l urwa-na-ssi-l Ind(a)ra Nasatya-nna*, which means: 'those of the belonging to Mitra, those of the belonging to the *urwa*'s, Indra, (and) the Nasatya's.' The variant of the treaty has *aru-na-ssi-l* for *urwa-na-ssi-l*. The place of Mitra far down the long list points to the fact that his function as treaty-god was in this case quite unimportant, and as to *urwa-na* (*aru-na*), it can by no means be a transcription of Varuna, because Hurrian does not know a development of an initial *w-* to zero (neither does Hittite). *Urwa-na* is probably the Hurrian plural of the Indo-Iranian mythological term *urwan* 'soul' (preserved in Old Iranian), and *Mitra-ssi-l urwa-na-ssi-l* means 'Those of the belonging to Mitra, those of the belonging to (the dead) souls', Mitra appearing here in his quality of the deity of light as *opposed* to the dead, or, contrariwise, as *judge* of the dead.

Now *urwa-* cannot be Indo-Aryan, while other glosses, especially *aika* 'one,' seem to point rather to Indo-Aryan than to Iranian. The 'Prakrit' form *satta* for 'seven' is, however, unexpected.

There certainly never was an Aryan language spoken in Mesopotamia. The Mitannian Hurrians belonged to the last wave of Hurrian immigration according to Margaret Khachikyan, coming apparently from modern Iranian Azerbaijan about 1700 B.C. The kingdom was officially called Hanigalbat; *Mittanni* < **Maitani* being apparently the dynastic name; the same name had been preserved as a territorial designation in the first millennium B.C., when the country near lake Urmia in Iranian Azerbaijan was called Matiane. The dynasty was apparently Matianian and originally - but no longer in Mesopotamia - Indo-Iranian-speaking. The Kingdom Hanigalbat itself was Hurrian. Note that the *mariana*-charioteers were *not* an aristocracy and were exclusively recruited from Hurrians, as follows from hundreds of documents. The term has a satisfactory Eastern Caucasian etymology.

However 1700 B.C. is too early for Iranians, and Iranian Azerbaijan is too far West for the Indians. But one is apt to forget that there are three, not two sub-branches in the Indo-Iranian linguistic branch: it was divided into Kafirs, Indo-Aryans and Iranians, and the Kafirs were, according to the authority of Georg Morgenstierne, the first to move south from Middle Asia. Note that Avestan, spoken originally on the main road from Middle Asia to the South, namely in the Marw-rud and Tejen-Harirud

