The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Introduction: The Archaeology of Language

- the discovery of the **Indo-Europeans** is one of the most fascinating and important stories in all of modern historical studies

- starts with a suggestion made by **William Jones** in 1786, a British judge in India, that **Sanskrit**, Latin, and Greek share a common language of origin
  - Sanskrit: *The Vedas*

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- Indo-European **historical linguistics**
  - various Eurasian languages derive originally from a single "mother tongue"
    - languages found from India to Iceland
  - root vocabulary demonstrates this well

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Introduction: The Archaeology of Language

- words which are related in this way are called **cognates**

- Jones' conclusion (1786 Meeting of the Asiatick Society of Calcutta):

  . . . no philologer could examine all three languages [Sanskrit, Latin and Greek] without believing them to have sprung from some common source which, perhaps, no longer exists.

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Introduction: The Archaeology of Language

- the "mother tongue" was eventually named **Proto-Indo-European**
  - we don't know what the original speakers called their own language –– or themselves!
- produced many "daughter languages"

- ramifications of the discovery of IE civilization were earth-shattering!
  - there was once a common culture
    - a common language presupposes a common religion, family and government structures
    - not well-received among the generally white-supremacist, Eurocentric colonial powers in the day

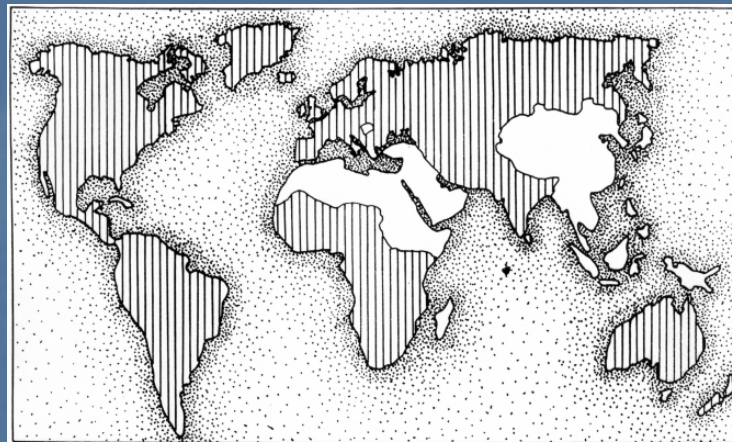# The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Introduction: The Archaeology of Language

- ramifications of the discovery of IE civilization were earth-shattering!
  - IE culture conquered much of the world
    - IE cultures include Persians, **Greeks**, **Romans**, **Slavs**, **Philistines**, Vikings, etc.
      - also their modern counterparts: Spanish *conquistadors*, Crusaders, European colonists, etc.
    - not IE: Sumerians, Egyptians, Hebrews, Etruscans, Assyrians, etc.

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- today more than half the world's population speaks at least one language derived from IE

  - and for most of those it's their native tongue or the official language of their nation

146   Nations of the world where an Indo-European language is either primary or recognized as an official language of state.

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
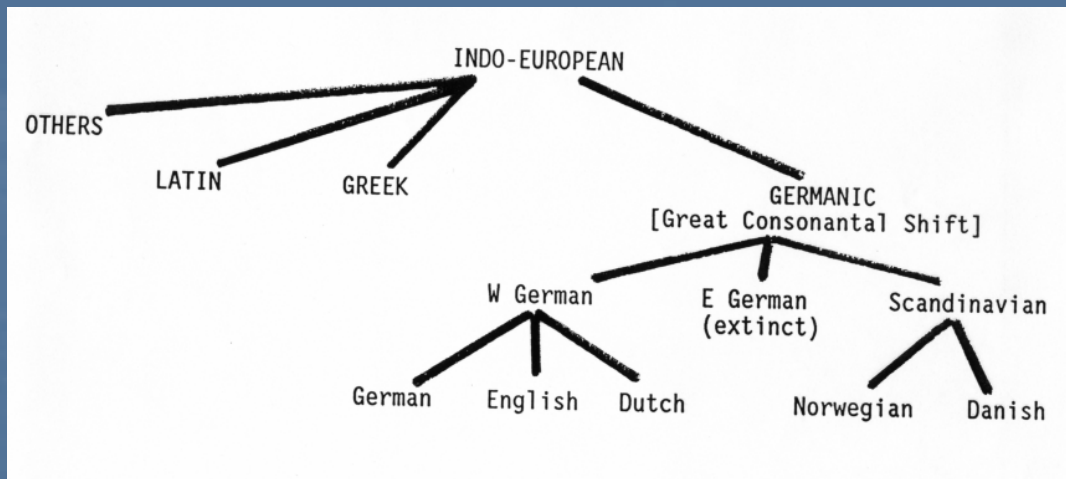## History of the Indo-Europeans

- ca.5000-2000 BCE: Indo-Europeans began expanding across Eurasia
  - displaced indigenous peoples and exterminated native cultures
    - Greeks (Greece), Romans (Italy), Slavs (Central Europe), Philistines (Canaan)
  - also displaced earlier IE invaders
    - e.g. **Dorian Invasion** into Greece, which caused a Dark Age (1100-800 BCE)

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History of the Indo-Europeans

- Indo-Europeans in Northern Europe

  - **Common Germanic** broke up into:

    - **Germanic**: German, English, Dutch, Yiddish

    - **Scandinavian**: Swedish, Danish, Norwegian

    - also, **Celtic**: Welsh, Scots Gaelic

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History of the Indo-Europeans

- date of this break-up is unknown

  - but it must have begun ca. 100 BCE

- the subdivision of Common Germanic followed natural (geographical) contours

  - <u>Scandinavian</u>: around the Baltic Sea

  - <u>West Germanic</u>: west of the Oder River

  - <u>East Germanic</u>: east of the Oder River

EUROPE AT CLOVIS' DEATH
A.D. 511
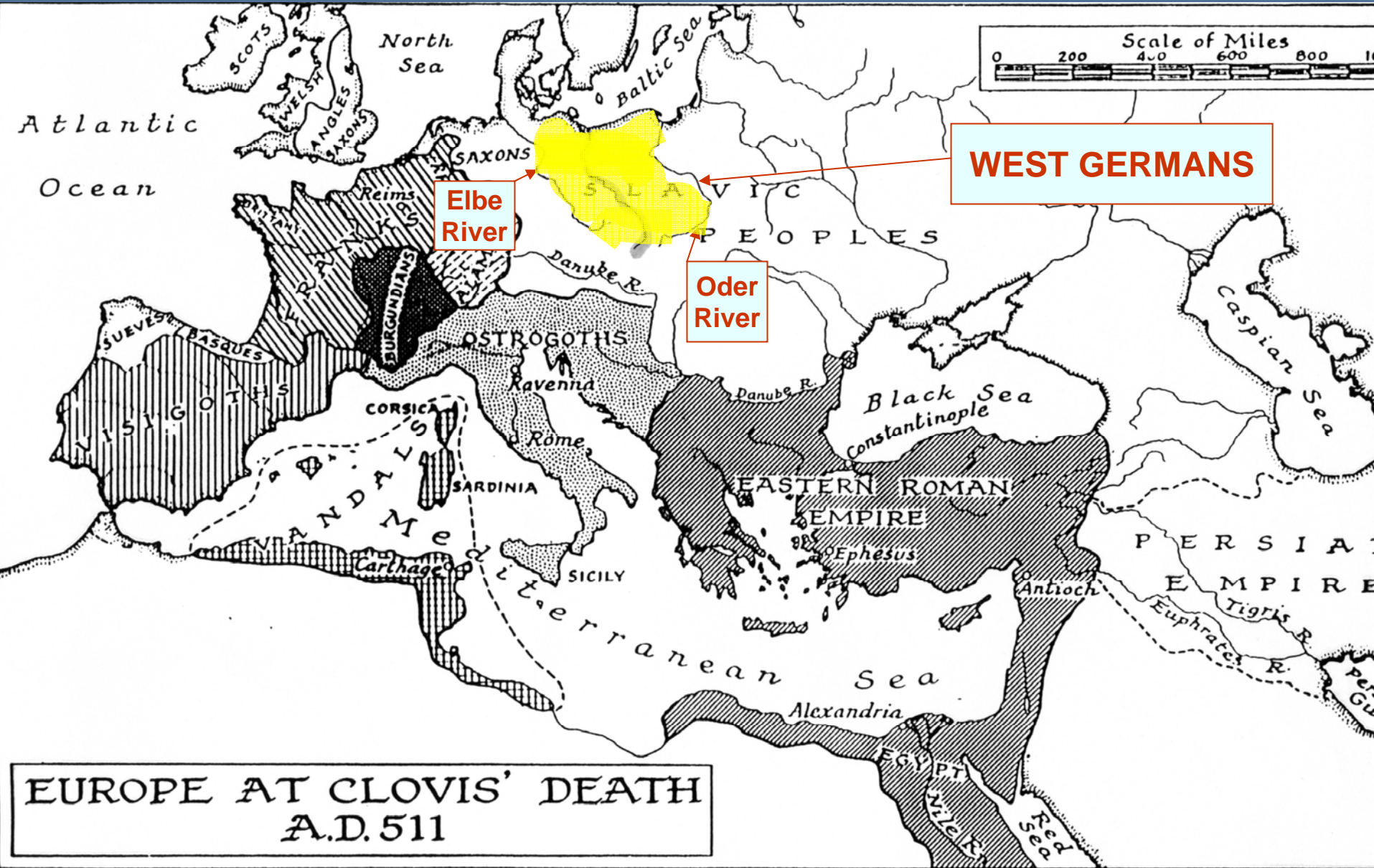
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The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
History of the Indo-Europeans

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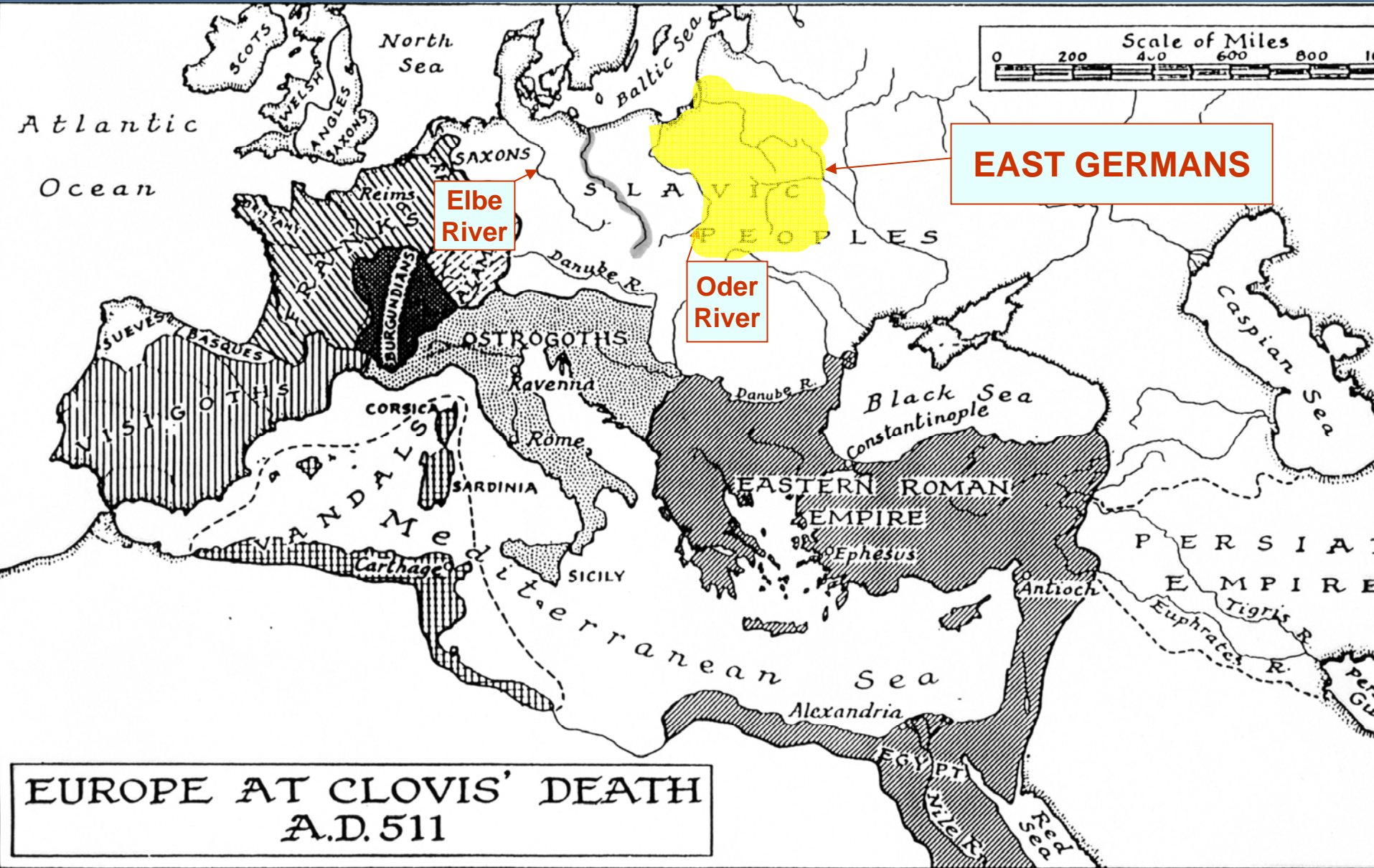   - <u>East Germanic</u>: east of the Oder River

        - all East German languages are now extinct!

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The Great Consonant Shift

- it was just before this time that Common Germanic underwent the **Great Consonant Shift**

  It is often assumed that the change was due to contact with a non-German population. The contact could have resulted from the migration of the Germanic tribes or from the penetration of a foreign population into Germanic territory.

  A.C. Baugh, *The History of the English Language* [1993] 20

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The Great Consonant Shift

- **consonants**: formed by stopping or restricting the flow of air through the mouth
  - stopping the flow of air:
    - <u>labials</u> (lips): *p*/*b*
    - <u>dentals</u> (teeth): *t*/*d*
    - <u>gutturals</u> (roof of mouth): *g*/*k*(*c*)
  - restricting the flow of air: *f*/*v*/*th*/*ch*/*j*

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The Great Consonant Shift

	UNVOICED		ASPIRATE		VOICED		UNVOICED
LABIALS:	P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
DENTALS:	T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
GUTTURALS:	K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

- **unvoiced**: *p/t/k(c)*

- **aspirate**: *ph/th/kh(ch)*

- **voiced**: *b/d/g*

- Great Consonant Shift:

  - FIRST STAGE: UNVOICED > ASPIRATE

  - SECOND STAGE: ASPIRATE > VOICED

  - FINAL STAGE: VOICED > UNVOICED

Grimm's Law

- **Grimm's Law**: **Jacob Grimm** (1785-1863)
  - one of the **Brothers Grimm**
    - wrote **Grimm's Fairy Tales**
    - the gruesome stories reflect the grim reality of non-urban life in early Western Civilization

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Grimm's Law

	UNVOICED		ASPIRATE		VOICED		UNVOICED
LABIALS:	P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
DENTALS:	T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
GUTTURALS:	K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

- by comparing Germanic and other IE words, Jacob Grimm was the first to recognize the Great Consonant Shift
  - e.g. IE *patêr- = what English word?*
  - *father*!
    - cf. paternal, paternity, patter

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Grimm's Law

- thus, the relationship between many Germanic and non-Germanic IE words can be reconstructed by reversing the Great Consonant Shift

  - we'll use Latin/Greek words because they have often produced recognizable English derivatives

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Grimm's Law

- but remember the following rules:
  - change only the voiced, unvoiced and aspirate consonants
    - all other consonants (*m*, *n*, *s/st, w*) are not affected by Grimm's Law and remain the same
  - vowels can change easily, e.g. *patêr-*/father
    - we'll leave a blank when reconstructing them
  - liquids (*l/r*) can shift position

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Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

GEN (US): genus, genesis, genetic

"race, family"

KIN

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

GEL(I)D(US):   gelid, congeal, Jell-O "frozen"

COLD

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

CHOL(OS):   cholera, melancholy
"bile"

GALL

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

HOST(IS):   host, hostile, hotel/hostel

"stranger"

GUEST

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

DA(CTYLOS):   dactylic, pterodactyl

"digit, finger, extremity"

TOE

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

DUO: dual, duo, duplicate

"pair, both"

TWO

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

THE(MA):   theme, synthesis, antithesis

"act"

DO

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

POL(Y):   polygon, polygamy

"many, much"

FULL
FILL

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

FER(O):   fertile, transfer, refer

"carry"

BEAR

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

FRAG(ILIS):   fragile, fragment, fracture

"crush, destroy"

BREAK

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

PISC(IS):   Pisces, piscary

"sea creature"

FISH

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
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unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

DOM(US):   domestic, domicile, dome
"house"

TAME
TIMBER

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

FER(VO):   fervid, effervescent

"become hot"

BURN

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

GRAN(US):   granary, granola

"grain"

CORN

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

CORN(U):   unicorn, cornet

"antler"

HORN

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

DE(N)T(ES):   dentist, dentition, indent

"molar, incisor"

TOOTH

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

AG(E)R: agriculture, agronomy
"field"

ACRE

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

TON(ITUS):   intone, astonish, detonate
"loud noise"

THUNDER

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

F LO(RA):   florid, florist, flourescent
"flower"

BLOOM

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

AP(O)-:   apostate, apostrophe, apostle

"away from"

OF
OFF

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Grimm's Law

unvoiced		aspirate		voiced		unvoiced
P	>	PH (F)	>	B	>	P
T	>	TH (F)	>	D	>	T
K/C	>	KH/CH (H)	>	G	>	K/C

PR(O)-:   progress, proceed, pro

"in place of, on behalf of"

FOR

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
The Indo-Europeans: History and Culture

- not only is IE language reconstructable, but so is IE culture

  - because we can reconstruct words from Proto-Indo-European, we can see the sorts of things and ideas that existed in early IE society (before the migrations that separated IE peoples)

- still, there's much we don't know

What We Don't Know About IE Culture

- no known archaeological site can be definitively linked to the Indo-Europeans
  - thus, no clear type of technology
    - horseback riding?
  - no form of writing
  - no historical events
    - the Agricultural Revolution?

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
The Indo-Europeans: History and Culture

What We Don't Know About IE Culture

- no clear dating of IE history

- **glossochronology**?

  - unreliable because rates of language change vary greatly and are unpredictable

  - break-up of common IE culture happened ca. 5000-2000 BCE

  - not very precise!

What We Don't Know About IE Culture

- no clear indication of where the Indo-Europeans lived

- **homeland problem**

- best guess: the steppes of central Russia

- the Indo-Europeans were probably nomadic
    - that, at least, would explain the absence of physical evidence

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
The Indo-Europeans: History and Culture

What We Know About the Indo-Europeans

- the Indo-Europeans conquered many lands and suppressed or exterminated many native peoples
  - e.g. in India, they created the caste system

What We Know About the Indo-Europeans

- their religion was polytheistic

- their chief god was "**Sky-Father**," cf. **Jupiter**

  - IE *deiw-*: "shining"; cf. Zeus, Tiw (Tuesday)

  - also cf. divine, deity, day

What We Know About the Indo-Europeans

- favored **tripartition**

  - the tendency to form or envision groups of threes

    - social classes: kings/warriors, priests, workers

    - universe: earth, sky, water/sea

      - Christian trinity: Father, Son, Holy Ghost

      - arguments/stories: beginning, middle, end

      - beginning of a race: "Ready, Get Set, Go!"

What We Know About the Indo-Europeans

- family structures:

. . . many family words (such as 'mother', 'husband', 'brother') can be reconstructed for Proto-Indo-European. These include several words for 'in-laws', which seem to have been used solely with reference to the bride. Evidence of this kind suggests that it was the wife who was given a position within the husband's family, rather than the other way round, and that the society must therefore have been patriarchal in character.

David Crystal, The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language (1987) 296

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
The Indo-Europeans: History and Culture

<u>What We Know About the Indo-Europeans</u>

- <u>government</u>: kings (*reg-*, cf. regal)

- <u>animals</u>: cows (*gwous*)

  - also sheep, pigs, dogs

- <u>technology</u>: ships (*nau-*), horses (*ekwo-*)

  - also bows/arrows

- but no IE words for "bronze" or "gold"

  - nor "ocean": IE's were not a coastal people!

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
The Indo-Europeans: History and Culture

What We Know About the Indo-Europeans

There are no anciently common Indo-European words for elephant, rhinoceros, camel, lion, tiger, monkey, crocodile, parrot, rice, banyan, bamboo, palm, but there are common words, more or less widely spread over Indo-European territory, for snow and freezing cold, for oak, beech, pine, birch, willow, bear, wolf, otter, beaver, polecat, marten, weasel, deer, rabbit, mouse, horse, ox, sheep, goat, pig, dog, eagle, hawk, owl, jay, wild goose, wild duck, partridge or pheasant, snake, tortoise, crab, ant, bee, etc.

Harold H. Bender, *The Home of the Indo-Europeans*

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Conclusion: Who Were the Indo-Europeans?

- Who *were* the Indo-Europeans?

  - Unknown! but linguistic evidence leaves no question they once existed

- Who *are* the Indo-Europeans?

  - all people who are born of IE stock or speak in IE language — or even anyone who is predisposed to think in "threes"

The Indo-Europeans and Historical Linguistics
Conclusion: Who Were the Indo-Europeans?

- the Indo-Europeans were and still are the most formidable conquerors ever!
  - they imposed their culture and values across the entire globe
    - the colonization of America was an IE invasion
  - and their descendants continue to do so
    - the first man to walk on the moon was IE
    - so maybe the reason we haven't returned is we found no natives there to displace!