# THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

# EPISODE 10: EARLY INDO-EUROPEAN MIGRATIONS

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. Over the last few episodes, we have focused on the oldest known ancestor of English – the ancient Indo-European language. And in the last episode, I looked at the evidence to determine when and where these ancient Indo-Europeans lived. Now I want to try to put all the pieces together to explore the emergence of the ancient Indo-Europeans and the spread of their language and culture throughout Europe and Central Asia. In other words, how do we get from the Indo-European homeland in the Eurasian steppes to the various places where the Indo-European languages ended up? So this is the story of the Indo-European migrations.

I am going to begin by looking at the emergence of these people in the Eurasian steppes, and then I'm going to explore of the advantages which they had which allowed them to migrate over thousands of miles carrying their language with them. Then I'm going to begin the look at the actual migrations of the people from the Eurasian steppes to the places where the various Indo-European languages emerged. So this episode will be heavy on history and light on language. But it is an extremely important and interesting step in the overall story of English.

In the last episode, I presented the evidence which has led most linguists and historians to conclude that the ancient Indo-European-speaking people lived in the region north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in Eastern Europe in part of the region known as the Eurasian steppes. The evidence also suggests that these people lived there between 4500 BC and 2500 BC. This time frame coincides with the emergence of the earliest human civilizations further south in Mesopotamia and the Middle East. And based upon the research of archaeologists who have conducted research in this region, many scholars now believe that these first Indo-Europeans were herders associated with what has been called the Yamnaya horizon. These Yamnaya herders were the first peoples of the steppes to create a herding economy. So let's begin by exploring the evidence which indicates how this culture developed.

I should begin by noting that there is no consensus as to the exact time, order or sequence of these events. I am relying upon many sources for the discussion in this episode, but I want to once again give a specific plug to David Anthony's excellent book, "The Horse, The Wheel and Language." It's a very good starting point if you're interested in the archaeological evidence surrounding the emergence and migration of the early Indo-Europeans. So be sure to check out his book if you want to lean more about this topic.

Now many historians of antiquity love to begin human history at around 10,000 BC. This may be partly because they like big round numbers. But it also happens to coincide with the end of the last Ice Age. So it marks the emergence of the world as we know it today. As the ice sheets melted, the oceans rose and the land bridge from continental Europe to the British Isles began to disappear, and the British Isles actually became islands. The land bridge also began to disappear between Modern Russia and Alaska. So the geography of the continents as we know them today began to emerge.

But something else also started to happen. As the world became wetter and warmer, carbon dioxide levels increased. And with more warmth, more moisture and more carbon dioxide, plants began to grow in abundance. Dense forests began to emerge over the northern hemisphere.

Now dense forests were good for some animals, but not good for others. For example, horses thrive in grasslands, but they struggle in forest environments. And with these new dense forests, the land which was available to roaming horses became more and more scarce. In fact, horses became completely extinct in North America. They also disappeared from modern-day Iran, lowland Mesopotamia, and the Fertile Crescent. And in Europe, horse populations also declined significantly as a consequence of these expanding thick forests.

But one of the few places where horses continued to live – and where they actually flourished – was the Eurasian steppes. The environment was perfectly suited for them. Large open grassy plains enabled horses to live and their populations grew in this area. So when we first look at the steppe region, say around 7000 BC, we find a region with a significant horse population. But we don't find many humans there.

At this point, most humans were still hunter-gatherers. There was some very early animal domestication and plant cultivation in parts of the Middle East, but in Europe and in the areas north of Black and Caspian Seas, humans still lived by hunting and gathering.

And at this early stage, the steppe region was a harsh environment for humans. Hunter-gatherers thrived in the region north of the Eurasian steppes in the forested areas of northern Russia. But further south in the vast steppe region which extended east-west across Eurasia, hunter-gatherers could not survive for any extended period. The open grassy steppes were largely useless to humans. Humans can't live on grass and the steppes were difficult to cross by foot. There were also relatively few animals in the steppe region which could be captured and eaten by humans. As a result, an extended migration into the steppes beyond the river valleys could be a life-threatening event.

But around 5700 BC, all of that started to change. Around that time, domesticated sheep and cattle began to arrive from areas in southeastern Europe. But it took about five more centuries, until around 5200 BC, for the people of the steppes to incorporate cattle-herding into their economy. And the arrival of cattle and sheep changed everything. This may not seem like a big deal. I mean it's just some cattle and sheep right? But for historians of this period, it is a seismic event. Because now, for the first time, human beings could actually enter into and live within the steppe region for longer periods of time. And that means they could begin to cross the steppes.

So what's the connection there? Well, with the arrival of cattle and sheep, these people stopped being hunter-gatherers in the traditional sense of the term. They now had domesticated animals. They were herders. Though the humans couldn't live off of grass, the cattle and sheep could. And the humans could live off the cattle and sheep. Cattle meant these people had regular access to meat, and also milk, cheese and dairy products, but more on that later. These people were no longer hunter-gatherers dependent on what they could find and catch. They could travel <u>with</u>

their food resources. And in time, as we will see, they could live off the animals for extended periods of time without even having to kill or eat them because they provided milk, cheese and other dairy products which could be replenished  without sacrificing the animal.

But just as importantly, as I discussed in the last episode, sheep began to evolve after they were introduced to the colder climates of Europe. Sheep wool began to grow longer and thicker in the colder climate and that enabled these ancient humans to use the wool for weaving. And woven textiles and fabrics started to be produced.  That meant these people could make clothing, tents and other textile products as they needed.  Now longer treks into the cold and forbidding steppes was possible – not necessarily easy – but possible.

To put this timeline into some additional context.  At the time when cattle and sheep were first introduced into the steppes (around 5700 BC) and when they were first domesticated there (around 5200 BC), the first agricultural communities were just starting to emerge at Sumer in Southern Mesopotamia. But even so, it would still take another 2000 years for the first cities to emerge there, which would be the first cities known to the world.  Meanwhile, the first European agricultural settlements and farming villages were just starting to emerge in the Balkans around modern-day Romania and surrounding areas.  These Balkan settlements were spawned by the adoption of agriculture, farming, and crop planting in those areas.  But in the steppes, there is no evidence of wide-spread farming. These people were herders, not grain farmers.

Around this same time, the post-glacial warming period after the end of the Ice Age reached its maximum.  Forests of elm, oak and lime had spread across northern Europe north of the steppes. And wild honeybees, which nest in oak and lime trees, spread with these trees throughout this region.  But these trees did not extend into Asia beyond the Ural Mountains. So as I mentioned in the last episode, honeybees were confined to this area west of the Ural Mountains and not the area east of the Urals.

By this point we have established that cattle and sheep had been introduced to the steppes, and this allowed the first extended forays by humans into the steppes beyond the river valleys. But as I said, it wasn't easy.  It was still difficult and potentially dangerous. Both humans and the animals needed access to water to survive. And when these people left the river valleys for the vast openness of the steppes, there was no guarantee that they would have access to water.  They also had to carry their belongings with them as they traveled, which meant that shelter and supplies were limited.  There was only so much humans could carry over long distances.

But circumstances started to change a few centuries later around 4800 BC.  We are now almost at the beginning the period in which the original Indo-European language was spoken.  Around this time another major event occurred when horses were domesticated.  Many archaeologists believe that horses were first domesticated in this same steppe region north of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea where the original Indo-Europeans likely originated. Remember, wild horses flourished in this area because it was basically an open grassy pasture.  And when these people first figured out how to domesticate horses, they did it to create a new source of meat.  I mean horses were a cheap source of winter meat because they would use their hooves to break through the snow and ice to eat the grass underneath. Other animals would not, or could not, do that. So this meant that

horses could feed themselves through winter and that alleviated the burden of maintaining a large herd of other types of domesticated animals which were difficult to maintain in the harsh winters of this region.

A few centuries later, probably around 4200 BC, it is believed that the step from eating horses to riding them took place. Again, this same region is believed to the place where horse-riding first began. Eventually, over the next 1000 years or so, horse-riding would spread outward from this region into neighboring regions. And here we find the first major advantage which these steppe herders had over their neighbors. The domestication of the horse, combined with the ability to ride them, gave these people a massive advantage over other people whom they would eventually encounter.

Horse-riding had major economic consequences for the peoples of the steppes. It made herding much easier and much more efficient. Without horses, a herder could herd around 200 sheep. But on horseback, the same herder could herd around 500 sheep – two and a half times as many.

Therefore horse riding allowed individuals to maintain larger herds of cattle and sheep which permitted greater accumulation of animal wealth. It also ensured increased mobility and more long-distance trade. And it allowed these people to scout for water and other sources of food much more efficiently while migrating.

But it also probably increased warfare against other herders and against settled agricultural communities. Why? Well, because larger herds required larger pastures, which meant conflicts with other herders and sometimes fixed agricultural settlements. Warfare and conflicts between these people and their neighbors was tribal in nature. In other words, there were no organized armies – just raiding and fighting between clans. And these factors may have led to the expansion and migration of these people across the steppes.

So, we've talked about the advantages of horse domestication and horse-riding which was initially unique to this area and which gave these people a distinct economic and military advantage over their neighbors. We now have to introduce another piece of the puzzle. This piece is the result of some recent research, not by linguists or archaeologists, but by geneticists. It's a fascinating bit of research which may tell us a lot about how this particular group of people were able to spread themselves and their language over such a vast geographic area. And it had to do, surprisingly enough, with their ability to consume milk and dairy products.

As I've said, the original Indo-European-speakers in the region north of the Black Sea were herders and pastoralists, but they were not especially skilled at grain agriculture and crop planting like was starting to occur to the west of the Black Sea in the Balkans. They were also backward compared to emerging societies in the Near East when it comes to technology – things like writing, arithmetic, cities and irrigation systems. So how was it that the language of these steppe herders, who appear at this point to be at a disadvantage compared to many of their neighbors, how was it that their language spread so far so quickly? Some genetics researchers now believe that their primary advantage may have come from an early lactose-tolerance mutation which has been clearly documented.

So let's explore this research. Lactose is the main sugar in milk. And in order to consume milk and other dairy products, humans have to produce an enzyme called lactase which allows for the body to digest the lactose. So if you produce this lactase enzyme, you can consume milk and dairy. If you don't produce this enzyme, you can't. Today, a majority of the world's population produces this enzyme, and they can consume dairy products. In other words, they are lactose tolerant. But that was not the case in early humans. In fact, it is not until around this period in our story of early humans that this genetic mutation began to occur.

Early humans – when they were hunter-gatherers – produced the lactase enzyme as babies and they could consume milk as small children. But as children grew older, they would stop producing the enzyme, and the children would become lactose intolerant. So babies could drink milk, but they lost that ability as they got older. But a mutation occurred in Europe which allowed adults to continue to produce lactase, and therefore maintain the ability to consume milk and dairy products throughout their lifetime. In other words, they became lactose-tolerant in adulthood. And according to recent genetic research on the worldwide distribution of this genetic mutation, it probably emerged first in the very steppe region that we have been discussing in the area north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea between 4600-2800 BC. That puts the mutation right in the heart of the Indo-European homeland during the exact same time frame that the original Indo-European language was being spoken. And the timing also means the mutation occurred shortly after the early Indo-Europeans began to domesticate cattle and goats.

Now many geneticists believe that this particular genetic mutation tended to occur when early humans began to domesticate cattle and other milk-producing animals. And they have identified the same mutation amongst tribes in Arabia after the domestication of camels. And it occurred again amongst the Tutsi tribes in Africa after they domesticated cattle. Cattle would have been used initially for meat and for plowing and pulling wagons. They would also be used for products like leather. But once this genetic mutation occurred within a tribe and had spread to enough members of that tribe, a new kind of pastoral society emerged – one in which people kept cattle primarily for milk and dairy rather than meat. In other words, it resulted in dairy farming. This type of farming is far more efficient than raising cattle for slaughter. It produces five times as many calories per acre. Therefore, with this genetic mutation in place, the original Indo-European speakers could raise and feed more people, and therefore more warriors, on the same amount of land as their neighbors.

Remember that Europe was very sparsely populated at this time. So even modest population growth could produce significant population advantages. As these dairy farmers began to outnumber neighboring foragers and grain farmers, they would have expanded at the expense of their neighbors. Their culture, their way of life, and their languages would have traveled with them. This advantage would have allowed them to expand into areas previously occupied by foragers and grain farmers like the Balkans, central Europe and the Indian subcontinent. But it would not have been an advantage against established cities like those in Sumeria and Mesopotamia. And this may explain some of the limits of Indo-European expansion.

As dairy farmers, Indo-European speakers would have also had the advantage of mobility. This is also a military advantage. Farmers have homes and villages that they have to defend. But herders and pastoralists can fight when and where they choose, particularly when you add the advantage of being able to ride on horseback, which these people had mastered.

By around 4,000 BC, which remember is very early in the period of the original Indo-European language, Indo-European speakers were beginning to spread from the area north of the Black Sea westward into the Balkans and the Danube Valley west of the Black Sea. Remember that this area had seen some of the first agricultural settlements in Europe. It was the area located just north of the pass between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea which I discussed in the last episode. This was one of the few points which permitted relatively easy travel from the north to the south. And grain agriculture and copper-making technology from the Near East had spread into this region of southeastern Europe. And as the horse-riding Indo-Europeans moved into this region from the north, the likely result was an era of warfare, migration and dislocation. The archaeological record also seems to confirm this. These Indo-Europeans who were moving westward into the Balkans were likely the ancestors of the Hittites and the other Anatolian speakers. If you recall, the Anatolina branch which includes Hittite is the oldest branch of the Indo-European language family. But more on that later.

So let's look at what the archaeological evidence indicates in this Balkan region west of the Black Sea. Archaeologists have discovered that the early settlements in this region were abandoned around 4000 BC, which is the period in which the first Indo-European herders began to move into this region. But they also noticed something else. A particular type of burial associated with these Indo-European steppe people called Kurgan burials began to appear in this region of the Balkans at the same time and in much greater numbers. Kurgan graves were pit graves covered by wooden beams and marked by a round mound on top. And as I said, these graves were the type generally associated with these Indo-European herdsmen. And here is a very important key. When modern archaeologists discovered these Kurgan burial sites in the Balkans, the bodies uncovered in those graves averaged almost four inches taller than people discovered in other graves of the same time period in this same region. This is believed to be confirmation of the physical advantages which these steppe herders had as a result of their increasing reliance on dairy farming.

So compared to most of the populations of Europe and Asia, these steppe dairy farmers had begun to develop distinct advantages over their neighbors in Europe and central Asia. They had domesticated horses and had developed the ability to ride them. And this increased their mobility, which increased the size of the herds which they could maintain. And that increased their wealth substantially. It also gave them a huge advantage in raiding and warfare. And they had developed a specific genetic mutation for lactose tolerance which allowed them to consume milk and dairy products in adulthood. And this allowed them to feed and support more people without sacrificing their animals. And it produced a population which was generally larger and healthier than their neighbors.

It is believed that the early Indo-European herders became more warlike as their mobility, superior numbers and better nutrition allowed them to win battles against other peoples. And by the way, I mentioned earlier that researchers have identified the same genetic mutation for lactose tolerance among the first peoples of the Arabian peninsula to domesticate camels and the first Tutsi tribes in Africa to domesticate cattle. And in those cases, just like with the Indo-Europeans, this genetic mutation led to a period of tribal growth and was immediately followed by a period of expansion at the expense of their neighbors. So this appears to be part of recurring trend in ancient history between cattle domestication, lactose tolerance, tribal growth, and eventual economic and military expansion.

One other quick note about genetics just to be clear. I am not saying as some have in the past that the original Indo-Europeans were genetically superior to other people in general. It was just that they acquired lactose tolerance early on and that gave them an advantage relative to their neighbors for a period of time until the mutation had spread far beyond these original Indo-Europeans. But that short-term advantage would have been a huge factor in the growth and expansion of these tribes over a next few centuries.

We can now move ahead a bit in our story to around 3500 BC. So right now, we're in the middle of the period in which the original Indo-European language was being spoken. At this point, the steppes started to become significantly drier and colder. This meant that animal herds had to be moved more frequently. And while the steppes were now open to these ancient humans, it was still challenging, and it was a difficult environment. As these herders moved, they had to carry their belongings with them including clothing and shelter. That was a challenge. And it became even more of a challenge in the drier and colder environment. With less water and colder temperatures, they needed access to more water and shelter. And they needed to migrate even more often because vegetation was becoming more limited. And herds were now getting bigger and bigger.

It is at this point that the final piece of the puzzle arrived. It was a new technology which allowed these early Indo-Europeans to become masters of the steppes. And that thereby enabled their language to spread over vast distances. And that technology was the wheeled wagon.

Around 3400 BC, the wheeled-wagon was introduced to the steppes. Remember that the original Indo-European language had two words for ***wheel***. And they had other words for ***axel*** and ***thill*** which is the pole to which animals were yoked. And they also had a verb meaning 'to ***ride'*** in the sense of ride in a vehicle. Archaeological evidence also confirms the introduction of wheeled-wagons in this area around the same time.

Now no one knows exactly where the first wheel or wheeled-vehicle was discovered. I think we have this popular notion that the wheel was invented by cavemen in the Stone Age. That notion probably comes from comic strips – maybe from the Flinstones. But the reality is that the wheel and certainly the wheeled vehicle is a much more recent invention. Around 4000 BC, potters were using a potter's wheel to make pottery and clay vessels in Sumeria. And around 3600 BC, the first pictures and drawings of wheeled vehicles began to appear in Sumeria. And the archaeological records confirms that wheeled-vehicles were in use on the Eurasian steppes by a

couple of centuries later. Regardless of exactly when and where the wheeled-vehicle was invented, they were on the steppes by around 3400 BC.

And here is why that is so important. Before the wheeled vehicles arrived, these herders had just started to break free from the river valleys where water and vegetation were abundant. But remember it was still a risky venture. But now, they could load up their wagons with water, and food and tents and other belongings and head out into the steppes with their herds for extended periods of time. These herders could now move indefinitely, and they could live on the steppes for months at a time. The wagon which was pulled by the cattle basically became a mobile home, and it permitted the dispersal of people throughout the steppes and eventually throughout Europe and Central Asia. The steppes became large open pastures which in turn allowed herders to keep even larger herds.

But again, this increased mobility and larger herds increased the potential conflict with other nomadic herders competing for the same land. This may also have encouraged the building of alliances between herders to manage the potential conflicts. As you may recall from an earlier episode, the original Indo-European speakers used the same word for both a 'guest' and a 'host.' The word was ***ghos-ti**. And the existence of this word suggests the reciprocal nature of the relationship as herders allowed each other to pass through their respective territories. In other words, today's host is tomorrow's guest. These relationships established mutual obligations similar to kinship relationships and were necessary to facilitate the movement of these herds.

So now we have all of the pieces in place. The cattle, sheep and domesticated horses gave these early Indo-Europeans access to the steppes. A genetic mutation allowed them to consume milk and dairy products which allowed them to become dairy farmers and support bigger and healthier populations and to maintain large herds without having to slaughter them for food. So as the size of the tribes increased, the physical size of the tribe members increased, and the size of their flocks increased. So that meant their power and wealth increased. It also required more mobility since large herds need more land to graze. This resulted in a sophisticated system of guest-host relationships. And when the covered-wheeled-wagon was introduced a short time later, their mobility increased exponentially. They were now masters of the steppes. And they were on the move.

We've now entered the era of the pastoral nomads. Movement and migration became the norm for these people. The horse and wagons had transformed the steppes from an ecological barrier to a transcontinental highway, and it enabled the spread and expansion of the original Indo-Europeans. We are now ready for the expansion of the Indo-European language.

As I said, with the growth in the population of these tribes, combined with the growth in the size of the herds, there was a constant need for migration and expansion. It was basically a nomadic lifestyle which meant move or die. Sometimes this expansion occurred through military power. Sometimes it occurred through migration and displacement of other peoples. Sometimes it occurred through intermarriage, and coalition-building and integration. Sometimes it was likely a combination of these factors. So the original Indo-European language expanded with the expansion of these people but not always through military conquest. But these Indo-European

people tended to be the dominant people in these new societies, and the language of the dominant group tends to perpetuate. So that was typically the original Indo-European language spoken by the people.

Earlier I mentioned that around 4200 BC or so, Indo-European herders were beginning to spread southwestward around the Black Sea in a counter-clockwise direction. And as you may recall, they encountered farming settlements in the Balkans west of the Black Sea. And the archaeological evidence indicates that many of these settlements were abandoned and overrun by the Indo-Europeans. So historians believe this branch of early Indo-Europeans were the early ancestors of the oldest known branch of the Indo-European family tree – the Anatolian Branch.

As its name suggests, these speakers continued their southward migration for the next few centuries eventually ending up in Anatolia, which is modern-day Turkey, south of the Black Sea. The most well known of theses Anatolian speakers were the Hittites, but they don't emerge until a little later in our story. But while these speakers were continuing their migration southward, another branch probably started to emerge.

Around 3600 BC, another branch of early Indo-European speakers had probably started to separate from the main group. But this group appears to have moved eastward along the steppes into central and eventually eastern Asia. These were the ancestors of the Tocharian speakers in northwestern China. An early split at around this time for this group is not shared by some historians, but it does help to explain why the Tocharian language is a Centum language, but all other eastern Indo-European languages are Satem languages.

Remember from an earlier episode there was an general division of the Indo-European languages into an eastern group which used an 's' sound for certain words like the Sanskrit word 'satem' for 'hundred.' And there was a western group of languages which used a 'k' sound like the Latin word 'centum' for the same word 'hundred.' And this 'k' sound used within the Centum group appears to be a continuation of the original 'k' sound used by the original Indo-Europeans. But these Tocharian speakers who lived all the way in western China did not speak a Satem language like the other eastern groups. So it is believed that these early ancestors of the Tocharian speakers broke away from the main group of Indo-Europeans before the Centum-Satem split occurred. Again, this is one theory. And they lived around the Ural River in the steppe region for a while between Europe and Asia. And later, they migrated eastward across modern Kazakhstan east of the Caspian Sea into the mountains in the area where modern-day China, Russia and Mongolia meet. And these speakers spoke an Indo-European dialect which ultimately developed into the Tocharian branch which was spoken in Xinjiang of China in the northwestern corner of China. And it was a language that was actually spoken there until around the seventh century AD.

Beyond the physical evidence for the early separation of the Anatolian speakers of Turkey and the Tocharian speakers of northwestern China around this time frame, we also have some linguistic evidence to confirm this. I've already mentioned the Centum-Satem distinction, and both of these early languages were spoken in the east, but remember they were not Satem languages like the other eastern Indo-European languages. So that suggests that they must have

separated from the original group a different point than the rest of the Satem language ancestors. The other clue is that these Anatolian and Tocharian languages don't have reconstructed Indo-European words for wagons or wheels. And that suggests that they must have separated from the main Indo-European groups before the wagon and wheel vocabulary was adopted into the early Indo-European language – in other words before wheeled wagons existed in the steppes. As I said earlier, wheeled wagons appeared on the steppes around 3400 BC. So this evidence suggests that these groups were separate and distinct from the main group before 3400 BC.

It is around this same time, say round 3400-3500 BC, that the very first cities started to emerge in southern Mesopotamia. These are cities of Uruk and Ur in the area known as Sumer. So everything we have discussed up to this point has occurred in early human prehistory before cities of any kind existed anywhere. And though it doesn't directly concern our story of the early Indo-Europeans, I should note that the first known writing starts to emerge at this point in those early cities of Sumer. And the writing developed to record economic transactions and to compile inventories. This was the ancient Sumerian language which is not an Indo-European language. But the idea of writing and the written language is important to our story, so hold onto that idea because it soon becomes very important.

Since I mentioned Sumer at this point, I guess I should also mention another group there who will become important to our story a little bit later – the Semitic people who spoke a group of closely-related Semitic languages. At around this point in our story, they still lived in Mesopotamia. Some of them lived and spoke Semitic languages in the south in Sumer. But most of them lived further up the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Central Mesopotamia. Since the ultimate origin of our alphabet lies with the descendants of these Semitic-speakers, this is a good time to mention them as it is their first known appearance on the historical scene.

And it is at this point in our story that something else very, very important to our story occurs. Around 3300 BC, many linguists and archeologists believe the first ancestors of the Germanic-speaking tribes started to split away from the main group of Indo-European speakers. Since these where there the ancient linguistic ancestors of English, they are of particular interest to us. At this point, the Indo-Europeans were probably not a specific group of people as much as a interrelated group of nomads and herders. They were probably somewhat analogous to the Celtic people of central and western Europe who emerged many centuries later. And by that I mean that these people had a shared set of dialects within the same language family, and they also shared other common cultural features. But they probably did not see themselves – nor were they probably viewed by others – as some unified group of people or tribes. We kind of lump these various inter-related people together in retrospect. So there were many sub-groups within this larger Indo-European group. And one of these lived on the western edge of the region where the early Indo-European dialects were being spoken. Specifically in and around the northwestern portion of the Black Sea. They were part of culture that archaeologists call the Usatovo Culture. And it is this group of Indo-Europeans who spoke a dialect which many historians now believe led to the original Germanic language from which English derived.

So with this little cliffhanger in place, I am going to conclude this episode at this point. And next time, we'll take a closer look at these ancestors of the Germanic speakers and how their language found their way to the Germanic homeland in northern Europe. And we'll also complete the migrations of the Indo-European tribes to establish a general time frame for the emergence of the first Greeks, the first Latin-speakers and the first Celts. So in sum, next time we'll conclude our look at the original Indo-Europeans, and we'll begin to look at the ancestors of the early Germanic tribes and the immediate ancestors of the Greeks, the Romans and the Celts.

So until next time, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.