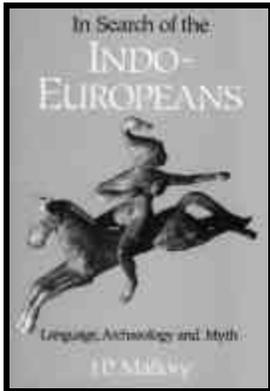
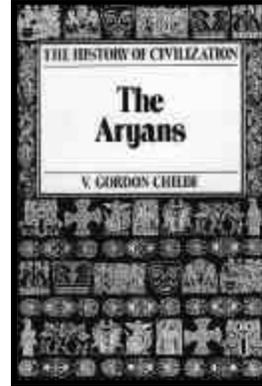


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**IN SEARCH OF THE
INDO-EUROPEANS:
LANGUAGE, ARCHE-
OLOGY, AND MYTH.**

BY J.P. MALLORY
Thames and Hudson Publishers.
1996 (1989)
288 pages



**THE ARYANS: A
STUDY OF
INDO-EUROPEAN
ORIGINS.**

BY V. GORDON CHILDE
Dorset Press. reprinted 1987
(1925 original?)
211 pages

A CHOICE OF HISTORIES
reviewed by Cyndara Morgan

Mallory's *In Search* is ADF's recommended introduction to Indo-European studies, and for good reasons: it is relatively recent, well-structured for the layman, avoids references to arcane grammatical nomenclature, and makes full use of Eastern European source materials (important not only due to the unfashionability of this field in the West, but also to the compelling weight of evidence locating the original homeland of the Proto-Indo-Europeans in Russia). It is a good, scholarly overview of an area overburdened with politically-honed axes, clearly written, and uses all the graphic tricks of undergraduate textbooks to make its complex subject matter penetrable.

For the serious scholar, Childe's earlier work offers an interesting contrast, although the red herrings of bypassed theories may distract the more general student. His introductory material, while charmingly chauvinistic to the old-fashioned mind, may raise tempers as well as eyebrows among the younger audience. One is quickly reminded that in his day, all high school graduates were required to become at least passably fluent in Latin, as well as familiar with grammatical concepts now relegated to specialists in linguistics. Nevertheless, once past the introduction the book quickly becomes immersed in solid archeological details, which have not changed dramatically since it was written.

Like most earlier Western scholars, Childe is intimately familiar with material relating to the classical civilizations of Greece, Rome, and the Near East, and he is not hesitant to provide critical commentary in these areas. By contrast, Mallory gives the West relatively short shrift, as his "center of gravity" quickly demonstrates an Indo-European point of origin farther eastward. While his general conclusions are sound, his focus on eastern evidence ignores the importance of developments in the diaspora to the evolution of later cultures such as the Celts, as well as the light shed by

conserved characteristics at the peripheries of Indo-European spread on proto-Indo-European culture in general. Thus Mallory virtually ignores the terminal branches of the family tree; while Childe, who begins with the known Indo-European peoples and attempts to trace these cultures backward through history to their beginnings, provides a rich background of understanding pertaining to major groups which is suitable for ritual application.

Both authors are primarily linguists trying to puzzle together the pieces of archeology. This alone is a signpost for caution. Significant differences well-known to specialists are easily overlooked by the generalist reviewer. A further difficulty in dealing with archeological work of the past two centuries is the disagreement between various modes of chronology. Even when the method of dating is given, there is no simple chart allowing for quick conversion between calibrated and uncalibrated radiocarbon dates, let alone the numerous relative chronologies based on remains of material culture, throughout the time span and geographic spread of the Indo-European migrations. Adding this fundamental uncertainty to a lack of familiarity with methods and persons gives a progressive compounding of potential error which cannot be avoided, but also must not be denied.

If you have not yet read your Mallory, do so. To even begin to understand Indo-European studies requires a wide background. For those who are interested in a deeper understanding, Childe, while older, may not yet be truly outdated; at the very least he offers a scholar insight into the evolution of ideas in a field where interpretation of data has often been as critical as the physical findings themselves.