

THE PRE-CELTIC INDO-EUROPEANS IN BOHEMIA

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The „pre-Celtic Indo-Europeans“ in Bohemia are those groups which used to be termed „Illyrians“. These were the earliest traceable Indo-European tribes in Bohemia. The author does not view southern Germany as part of the original area of Celtic settlement, recent studies having shown that only northern France can be considered as such. The migration of the Celts to southern Germany can be dated from 500 BC on, and to Bohemia from about 400 BC on. In both areas an old Indo-European population came under Celtic rule. But in southwestern Bohemia links with the Indo-European population of the Upper Palatinate were preserved for centuries. The Celts and the German tribes which followed them from the Second and First centuries BC presumably assimilated the bulk of the pre-Celtic population, but the latter managed to survive longer in such socially separate groups as fishermen and presumably cattle-breeders. These were absorbed only later by the Slavs. Most of the pre-Slavic names of rivers and mountains are pre-Celtic. Their frequency is relatively low when compared with Thuringia, however; this can be explained by the fact that between the departure of the main body of the Bohemian German tribes around the year 530 and the appearance of the Slavs after 568, depopulation set in, as was the case in eastern Germany, with the result that the Slavs encountered only relatively small segments of the older population.