



# **The Cambridge Medieval History - Book III: The Barbarian Invasions of the Western Roman Empire**

*Martin Bang, Norman Baynes, M. Manitius, Ludwig Schmidt, Christian Pfister, T. Peisker*

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THE race which played the leading part in history after the break-up of the Roman Empire was the race known as the Teutons. Their early history is shrouded in obscurity, an obscurity which only begins to be lightened about the end of the second century of our era. Such information as we have we owe to Greeks and Romans; and what they give us is almost exclusively contemporary history, and the few fragmentary statements referring to earlier conditions, invaluable as they are to us, do not go far behind their own time. Archaeology alone enables us to penetrate further back. Without its aid it would be vain to think of attempting to answer the question of the origin and original distribution of the Germanic race.

The earliest home of the Teutons was in the countries surrounding the western extremity of the Baltic Sea, comprising what is now the south of Sweden, Jutland with Schleswig-Holstein, the German Baltic coast to about the Oder, and the islands with which the sea is studded as far as Gothland. This, not Asia, is the region which, with a certain extension south, as far, say, as the great mountain chain of central Germany, may be described as the cradle of the Indo-Germanic race. According to all appearance, this was the centre from which it impelled its successive waves of population towards the west, south, and south-east, to take possession, in the end, of all Europe and even of a part of Asia. A portion of the Indo-Germanic race, however, remained behind in the north, to emerge after the lapse of two thousand years into the light of history as a new people of wonderful homogeneity and remarkable uniformity of physical type, the people which we know as the Teutons. The expansion of the Indo-Germanic race and its division into various nations and groups of nations had in the main been completed during the Neolithic Period, so that in the Bronze Age—roughly, for the northern races, 1500-500 *BC*—the territories which we have indicated above belonged exclusively to the Teutons who formed a distinct race with its own special characteristics and language...

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