

# The Linguistic and Cultural Significance of the Atlas Linguarum Europae

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## 1. Some background information

The *Atlas Linguarum Europae* (ALE) has been in existence for over a quarter century now. Recently fascicle 6 of volume I appeared (Viereck 2002), fascicle 7 is with the publisher and the manuscripts of fascicle 8 are now being prepared for publication. It is hoped that the maps will from now on also appear in digitalised form. The ALE can be called a linguistic atlas of the fourth generation, being preceded by regional and national atlases as well as by atlases of language groups. Atlases of the fifth type, i.e. on entire language families such as Indo-European, or on the final type, namely a world linguistic atlas, do not exist as yet.<sup>1</sup> The ALE is the first continental linguistic atlas. Its frontiers are neither political nor linguistic but simply geographic.<sup>2</sup> The choice of the continent has nothing to do with Eurocentrism but only follows from the present state of research.

The linguistic situation in Europe is quite complex. No fewer than six language families are present here: Altaic, Basque, Indo-European, Caucasian, Semitic and Uralic. In these language families altogether 22 language groups, such as Germanic and Romance, can be counted. These, in turn, consist of many individual languages. It thus becomes apparent that the demands on the scholars to interpret the heterogeneous data collected in 2,631 localities from Iceland to the Ural mountains are very high indeed.

The ALE is, primarily, an interpretative word atlas. It uses both traditional and innovative methods. Among the former onomasiology and semasiology must be mentioned. Further below I shall deal with one such notion. Motivational mapping, however, is an innovative kind of interpreting geolexical data. It goes beyond an interest in etymology and asks for the causes, the motives in designating certain objects. Only in a large-scale project such as the ALE can this approach be successfully pursued. In national, let alone regional linguistic atlases, the area is too small for the approach to be productive. This may be one reason why it has aroused so little interest prior to the ALE. Another may be seen in de Saussure's dominance in modern linguistics. The arbitrariness of the

linguistic sign, important as it is for the functional aspect of language, left hardly any room for the genetic aspect of language, i.e. for the serious study of motivations. Seen more narrowly, however, the motivation of a linguistic sign is not in opposition to its arbitrariness, as the choice of a certain motive itself is not obligatory.

The latter-mentioned aspects point to the past and it comes as no surprise that insights into the ethnolinguistic origins of Europe are also expected from the ALE. This is a most lively and controversially debated field at present where archeologists and geneticists join forces with linguists as the works of Renfrew (1987), Cavalli-Sforza & Ammerman (1984), Sokal et al. (1992) as well as of Gamkrelidze & Ivanov (1995) reveal.<sup>3</sup> In the Uralic area the Continuity Theory, first advanced by archeologists then by linguists, seems now accepted by the majority of the specialists. According to this theory Uralic peoples and their languages have lived in their present historical territories since the Mesolithic Age.<sup>4</sup> Alinei (1996) adopts a similar approach for Indo-European arguing that there has never been an Indo-European invasion and that Indo-European languages have followed the same diffusion pattern as the Uralic languages.<sup>5</sup>

As regards the ALE, insights into Europe's cultural past follow less from loanwords and from reconstructed roots,<sup>6</sup> although the project also has important contributions to its credit in these two areas, but rather from motivations in so far as they are transparent. I will draw mainly on ALE data but also on my own research in illustrating Europe's cultural history.

## 2. Cultural history and religion

As religion is the basis of every culture, the frame of reference is the history of religions. The religions' historian Donini (1977, 1984) has convincingly shown that in a classless society everything is natural and supernatural at the same time. The distinction between 'sacred' and 'profane' came later. As any class of realia such as plants, animals and natural phenomena including planets is magic, they thus have a magico-religious character whose earliest form manifests itself in totemism, in totemic relationships with various classes of realia. In primitive societies this is still observable today.<sup>7</sup> This relationship assumes different manifestations as will be shown later.

The first to have proved that modern folk literature preserves very ancient myths and conceptions was Propp (1946/1987). His insights as well as Riegler's (1937/2000) are of great importance in interpreting the dialectal data. These data show that the cultural history of Europe is not made up of random elements and events but follows a unified, well-structured pattern where three separated layers can be distinguished.

## 2.1. The Christian/Muslim layer

The layer that can be recognized and dated most easily belongs to history, namely to Christianity and Islam. As this is the most recent level, it also occurs very frequently in the data. Within this layer Christian motivations appear much more often than Muslim ones, thus mirroring the difference in the areal spread of the two religions in Europe.

Among animals, designations of the smallest and weakest pig of a litter can be mentioned in this category. In England and Wales apart from *Daniel*, *Anthony(-pig)* was elicited, sometimes as *Tanthyony*, a wrong separation of *Saint Anthony*. He was the patron saint of swineherds to whom the smallest pig of each litter was usually vowed.

The butterfly,<sup>8</sup> too, is Christianized in Europe, mainly in the South, as 'little angel', 'little Easter', 'the pope's wife' and 'God's hen', but also in Finland as 'Brigit's bird' and in Norwegian dialects as *marihoena* 'hen of the Holy Mary'. Also the lady-bird yields a rich harvest everywhere in Europe. Most commonly a Christian or Islamic religious being or notion is associated with another animal, such as a bird (cf. English *lady-bird*), a hen (Danish *marihøne*, French *poulette au bon Dieu*, Catalan *gallineta de la Mare de Deu*), a cow (English *lady-cow* or *cow-lady*, French *vache à Dieu*, Italian *vacchetta della Madonna*), an ox (Spanish *buey de Dios*, Romanian *boul-popei*) or a beetle (German *Marienkäfer*, English *lady-bug*). The religious being or notion can be 'God' (Spanish *arca de Dios* 'God's chest'), 'angel' (Breton *elik doue* 'God's little angel'), Jesus (Swedish *Jesu vallflicka* 'Jesus' shepherd'), ('Virgin) Mary' (Swedish *jungfru marias nyckelpiga* 'Virgin Mary's key servant', Italian *anima della Madonna* 'soul of the Holy Virgin', French *bête de la Vierge* 'animal of the Holy Virgin') or the names of saints such as, in Italy, *S. Martino*, *S. Gioani*, *S. Nicolà*, in France, *Saint Jean*, *Saint Jacques*, *Sainte Catherine* and, in Spain, *San Antón*. In the Muslim area we find 'Allah', 'mosque' and 'Fatimah', the name of Mohammed's daughter.<sup>9</sup>

For plants the magico-religious motivations are more numerous. The pansy (*Viola tricolor*) may be called *Heiliges Dreifaltigkeitsblümchen* ('Holy Trinity flower') in German. The daffodil (*Narcissus Pseudo-Narcissus*) is *Saint Peter's bell* in Wales, and *Saint Peter's herb* is an expression for the cowslip (*Primula veris*) in parts of England. Very many plant-names in the British Isles occur with the motivation 'devil' as the EDD, s.v. 'devil' II. 2 reveals. The great reedmace, *Typholia latifolia*, is attested with 'holy', as is the Glastonbury thorn, *Crataegus Oxyacantha*, whereas the dandelion, *Leontodon Taraxacum*, and the rose-root, *Rhodiola rosea*, show a motivation with 'priest' in Britain<sup>10</sup> and the woolly-headed thistle, *Carduus eriophorus*, one with 'friar' there.<sup>11</sup>

Natural phenomena as well as planets also testify to a Christianization and Islamization in Europe. The classic example in the ALE is the rainbow—and not only for the most recent level but for the whole geolexical stratigraphy. Everywhere in Europe we

find compounds with, e.g., 'belt', 'bow', 'bridge', 'ribbon', 'ring' plus a religious motivation such as 'God's belt', 'Noah's bow', 'St. Barnaby's crown' or 'Allah's bow'. Once the basic structure of the classificatory system had been worked out, it became clear that the rainbow had been considered sacred by European peoples and that with the advent of the new religions lexical innovations were coined expressing the same relationship that had existed earlier.<sup>12</sup> Also the moon once had a religious veneration, still discernible in Hungarian *istenkalácsa* ('God's cake').<sup>13</sup> German *Herr Mond* as a form of address belongs to a pre-Christian cult.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2. The prehistoric layers

Within the prehistoric period two levels can be distinguished, one characterized by 'supernatural', 'superhuman' pagan figures and, leaving anthropomorphism, the other by still earlier zoomorphic and kinship representations. The basic structure has remained the same from prehistoric to historic times. It is quite natural that present-day evidence for the two prehistoric layers, especially for the zoomorphic layer, is less overwhelming.

### 2.2.1. The anthropomorphic layer

This middle layer is characterized by anthropomorphic representations. The same notions that provided examples for the other layers can be drawn upon here.

Animals provide quite a number of magico-religious names. For the weasel there is 'fairy' in English, 'witch' in French, 'Diana' in Sardinian, 'demoiselle' in German and 'domestic genius' in Russian.<sup>15</sup> The lady-bird is associated with the Finno-Ugrian god *Ukko* (the Old Man) and in Frisian with the elf *Puken* ('puck'). The butterfly appears in Austria as 'the forest elf' and in Dutch as *boterwif* and *boterhex* ('butter witch'). Fairy names for the butterfly are also attested in Italian (*farfarello*) and French (*farfardet*), both closely connected with *farfalla* 'butterfly'. The grasshopper may be 'pregnant mother' and 'lady' in Italian and 'demoiselle' in French. The motivation for the smallest pig in the litter in Ireland is 'fairy' (*sióg* and *siabhra*). The same motivation is attested in England for the glow-worm, while 'witch' is noted there for the swallow.

As for plants, the motivation 'fairy' occurs in England for the *Primula veris*, 'witch' in English dialects for *Pyrus Aucuparia*, *Leontodon Taraxacum* and *Digitalis purpurea*. Furthermore, the EDD notes 'Jupiter' for *Sempervivum tectorum*.

For the supernatural powers such as the corn spirit we also encounter anthropomorphic motivations such as, in Ireland, *carlin*, *seanbhean* (both meaning 'Old Woman'), *old maid*, (*old hag*, *cailleach* ('old hag', also meaning 'witch')). A mythical 'Old Man' is widespread in Germany, as is a mythical 'Old Woman' (cf. Beitzl 1933/2000).<sup>16</sup>

Among natural phenomena and planets, the rainbow has anthropomorphic

representations everywhere in Europe. In the Turkic area they are associated with Tängri, in the Uralic area with Ukko and Tiermes, in the Indo-European area with Laume (in the Baltic region), Iris, 'Old Woman' (in the Romance region), often together with 'bow', 'belt' or 'ribbon'. For thunder as well as for lightning one encounters Germanic Thorr, Lithuanian Perkunas and the Finno-Ugric Ukko. Names for cloud can be motivated by 'Old Man', as in Swedish. For the moon we find 'Old Man' in the Nenets area and 'hoary Old Man' in Ostiac.

### 2.2.2. The zoomorphic layer

In the most archaic layer that can be distinguished, i.e. the zoomorphic and totemic layer characteristic of egalitarian societies, the realia investigated appear in the form of either an animal or a kinship name.

Starting with supernatural, magico-religious beings, an appropriate example would be the last corn sheaf cut at harvesting into which the vegetation demon, it was believed, retreated.<sup>17</sup> In Ireland we find *granny* ('grandmother') and in German *Mutter* ('mother') and 'old grandmother' as designations for the last corn sheaf. Animal names are also attested for the last corn sheaf: *girria* ('hare'), *hare's bite/sheaf/seat/tail*, *cow*, *hog*, *piardóg* ('crayfish'), *rabbit* and *swallow* occur in Ireland and many more are recorded in Germany (cf. Beitzl 1933/2000).

Coming to animals, Riegler (1937/2000) had already interpreted wild animals and insects as relics of a totemistic view of the universe in which they would be our closest relatives. This relationship, similar to kinship, is consequently expressed by kinship terms. Propp (1946/1987) notes that the totem animal in its original form is embodied by the 'mother' and by matrilinear kin. This is indeed what we most often find in European dialects.<sup>18</sup> Many kinship names were recorded for the lady-bird: 'grandmother' in, e.g., Polish, Russian, Serbian and Croatian, 'mother' in, e.g., Romanian, Belorussian, 'aunt' in German and Italian, 'bride and spouse' in, e.g., Turkish, Albanian, Italian, 'sister-in-law' in Bulgarian. 'Grandfather' occurs in Swedish and Maltese and 'uncle' in Albanian.

The butterfly as a relative appears as 'grandmother' in Rhaeto-Romance (*mammadonna*), in Russian (*babočka/babuška*) as well as in other Slavic languages, as 'mother' in German and Sardinian and as '(grand)father' in the Uralic area<sup>19</sup>.

Kinship names for the weasel abound: ('little') 'bride' is attested, e.g., in Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Italian, Greek, Albanian and German, 'godmother' in, e.g., Galician and Spanish (*comadreja*), 'daughter-in-law' in Portuguese, Occitan, Italian, Turkish and Hungarian, 'mother' in England<sup>20</sup> and 'godfather' in German.

Many more examples of this type can be cited. Thus the bear is called 'mother', 'father' and 'grandfather' by Turkic and Tartar peoples and 'dear grandfather' by the

Swedes. The Hungarians call it 'godfather' and the Lapps 'clever father'. The rabbit is 'brother' in English. The fox appears as 'godfather' in German (*vaddermann voß* in Low German or *Herr gevatter* in High German) and as *mon cousin* in French. The French word *parent* 'relative' is a name for cuckoo in that language, and the toad is called *großmudder* 'grandmother' in Low German.

It must be interpreted as a sign of prehistoric totemism when tribes or their leaders were given names of animals. The leaders of the Jutes *Hengist* ('stallion') and *Horsa* ('horse') or the leader of the Goths *Berige* ('bear') are cases in point, as are the Germanic *Wylfingas* ('wolf'), the Italic *Hirpi* (from Latin *hirpus* 'wolf') and the *Piceni* (from Latin *picus* 'woodpecker').

Compared with animals, plants do not play the same role in totemism. Some plants are given kinship names, others are associated with animals. The pansy (*Viola tricolor*) is called *bratky* ('brother and sister') in the Ukraine. For England the EDD lists many plant names with, e.g., the motivation 'pig', 'fox', 'goat', 'toad', 'cat' and 'horse', where, however, the magico-religious belief is not always clear.

As to natural phenomena and planets, the moon is called 'grandfather' in Nenets and thunder is called 'father' and 'grandfather' in the Finno-Ugric area. These relationships are clearly totemic. In this class of realia animals occur rather often. For the rainbow we have 'dragon', 'snake', 'ox', 'cow', 'fox', 'drinking animal' or simply 'drinker'<sup>21</sup> in many European languages and dialects. Other zoomorphic representations appear with thunder, namely 'dragon' and 'serpent' and with lightning ('whale' and 'dolphin')<sup>22</sup>. Mist is associated with the 'fox' and the 'wolf' in France and Germany, the 'eagle' with storms in Northern Europe and the 'cat' with the air trembling with heat (in parts of Germany).

### 2.3. Conclusion

In the process of the cultural development of Europe we thus find recurrent structural patterns: the same reality was first given kinship and zoomorphic names to be followed by anthropomorphic names<sup>23</sup> and finally by Christian and Islamic names – and this across all language and dialectal borders. While dating the last-mentioned layer is unproblematic, Alinei assumes

that dating the anthropomorphic representations of reality is connected with socially stratified societies, typical of the *Metal Age*, while zoomorphic and kinship representations are connected with more primitive societies of the *Stone Age*.

More precisely, and also from a glottogenetic point of view, kinship names used for family relations would obviously exist already before magico-religious thinking began (some time in Middle and Upper Paleolithic,

when the first forms of burial appear). Then we would need to know something like totemism, in the Upper Paleolithic, to allow the attribution of kinship names to animals (and less frequently to plants and other realia), and those of animals to other referents. The frequent attribution of magico-religious and kinship names to insects can be explained by their central role in traditional feeding (1997, 27).

Also designations for bread (cf. Viereck 2000), for names of children's games (cf. Viereck 2003) and for names of diseases (cf. W. Viereck & K. Viereck 1999) follow the same pattern. Let me just mention the disease that appeared, most unfortunately, almost daily in the press not long ago, namely *Bacillus anthracis* or *anthrax*. In Serbian and Croatian either a taboo word is used, 'the evil', or anthrax is connected with an animal, a demon thought to inflict the disease, namely a wolf or a sheep. Later *anthrax* had anthropomorphic names like the English *elf cake* or Czech *Bozek* (the name of a god). Again later we find for *anthrax* attested *heiliges Feuer* ('holy fire') in German and *holy fire* in English, both parallel to Latin *sacer ignis*. Or there are in the historical period expressions like 'St. Anthony's revenge' or 'St. John's revenge' for *anthrax*. The saints took over certain traditional functions of their predecessors and were thought to be responsible not only for healing diseases but also for inflicting them on those who were disobedient – a genuine pre-Christian thought.

As this last example clearly shows, the three periods mentioned, of course, do not end and begin abruptly. Each one of them lasted for thousands of years. Archaeological finds show that also between the Stone Age and the Metal Age there were fluid transitions and that anthropomorphic representations were found also from the Neolithic Age (Müller-Karpe 1998). That the transitions and overlaps between the pagan and Christian layers can be documented much better is due to their being much closer to our time. Up to the early 4th century A.D. the early Christian church was an underground church and it took many centuries until the Christian faith had penetrated everywhere in Europe. In northern Europe paganism co-existed with Christianity until the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Capelle 2005). Only in the 8th century A.D. was the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* written in either Fulda or Mainz (both in Germany) with instructions how to deal with pagan cults, spells and fortune-telling (Müller-Kaspar 1996, 2, 419).

With new religious beliefs a wave of new designations followed, yet the old conceptions often remained the same. To take just one example out of many:

When Christianity came to Britain, the bright yellow flowers of the plants in the *Hypericum* family that had been associated with the golden brightness of Baldur the sun-god came to be called St. John's wort, as Baldur's Day became St. John's

Day. The plant continued to be thought a cure for wounds and on St. John's Eve good Christians wore a sprig of it to ward off evil spirits and especially to protect themselves against the stray thunderbolts of the gods (Ashley 1974, 116).

St. John's Day is the Christian equivalent of the summer solstice, one of the most important events in prehistoric times. In the early Christian period pagan thought was alive and well. However, examples of this can easily be found today: The initials of Caspar/Kaspar + Melchior + Balthasar + the year are still written on the entrance doors of people's houses in Catholic areas in Germany, in Italy and in Poland on Epiphany, January 6, to protect the people from evil of any kind<sup>24</sup> and, to mention a final example, small pictures of Christopher are hung up by car drivers as a protection in many countries, such as Ukraine and Germany. Apparently Enlightenment had no effect on people's piety.

The ALE is naturally based on European dialects. The adopted motivational approach has revealed some important pieces in the mosaic of the cultural development of Europe. Their implications, no doubt, transcend the frontiers of the European continent. In the light of the complementary nature of world cultures it would be highly desirable if the picture were complemented by insights gained about other cultures.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. Designations of 'grave'

As already mentioned, the European linguistic atlas also offers onomasiological maps where notions are interpreted both etymologically and semantically. Recently I dealt with the notion 'workman' (Viereck & Goldammer 2003 and Viereck 2004) and now designations of 'grave' will be investigated in a number of European languages. They were elicited as responses to the question: "Quel est dans votre dialecte le nom du trou dans la terre où l'on met le mort?" [What is in your dialect the name of the hole in the earth where one lays the dead?] These words are very old indeed in European languages. The first forms of burial appear, as noted above, already in the Middle and Upper Paleolithic.

#### 3.1. Etymological considerations

These are divided into remarks on Indo-European and Non-Indo-European languages. I shall start with the former as they were and are clearly dominant in Europe<sup>26</sup>.

#### 3.2. Indo-European languages

The modern expressions for grave in these languages can be traced back to the following eight roots:

3.2.1. Indo-European \**ghrebh-* 'to dig', 'to scratch', 'to scrape' (Pokorny 1959,

455f.), ?\**g<sup>h</sup>reb<sup>h</sup>*- 'to dig' (Rix & Kümmel 2001, 201)

In most European languages the modern expression for the hole in the earth in which one lays the dead goes back to this root. In the Germanic languages it developed into Gothic and Old High German *graban*, Old English *grafan* and Old Norse *grafa*. From these verbs nouns were formed, namely Old High German *grap* > Modern German *Grab*, Old English *græf* > Middle English *grave* (the disyllabic form was probably due to the especially frequent occurrence of the word in the dative [locative] case) > Modern English *grave*, Old Norse *grof* > Danish *grav*, Swedish *graf* and Icelandic *gröf*, Old Saxon, Middle Low German, Middle Dutch *graf* > Modern Dutch *graf*.

As Old Church Slavonic shows *grebǫ* 'to dig' and *groby* 'grave', the mentioned root is also the basis for most of the Slavonic languages: Today we have *grob* in Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian and Bulgarian, *grób* in Polish, *hrob* in Czech and Slovak and *row* in Sorbian. Slovenian dialects also show the diminutive *grobec* as well as *grobišče*, *groblje* and *pogrob*, all going back to this root. Russian *grob* today means 'coffin', whereas it also meant 'grave' earlier (Pfeifer 1999, 590). Whether Romanian *groapă* 'grave' is related to the Slavonic languages, for instance, to Bulgarian *grob* is a matter of debate. There are etymologists who assume *groapă* to be autochthonous, and others who relate it to Albanian *gropë*, also meaning 'grave', 'pit' (Ciorănescu 2002, 379). That *gropë* is an old word in Albanian becomes apparent through the presence of the related verb *gremonj* 'to dig'. The notions for 'grave' in Romani show that Romani borrowed freely from neighbouring languages: *hrobos* is a loan from Slovak *hrob*, *grabo* a loan from German *Grab*, *govr* a loan from Yiddish *kewuro* and *morminto* a loan from Romanian *mormânt* (Wolf 1960, 93, 102, 154).

### 3.2.2. Indo-European *\*tynem* 'to swell' (Rix & Kümmel 2001, 654)

This root developed into Old Greek (and Modern Greek) *τύμβος* 'earth-mound', 'grave-mound' (Hofman 1950, 378 and Frisk 1973, 943f.) and Latin *tumēre* 'to swell', which, in turn, gave *tumulus* 'earth-mound', 'grave-mound'. English *tumulus* is a loan from Latin; its meaning is 'an ancient sepulchral mound'. The post-classical, Church Latin expression *tumba* 'grave' indicates that this word is a late loan from Greek and not a further development of the Latin words mentioned (Walde 1930-1956, 715). *Tumba* penetrated into several Romance languages, see French *tombe* and *tombeau*, Italian, Provençal and Catalan *tomba* and Spanish, Portuguese and Sardinian *tumba*, always meaning 'grave' (Dee 1997, 536). Löpelmann (1968, 1314) lists *tonba* and *tunba* 'grave' in Basque; these are loans from the neighbouring Romance languages. English *tomb* – with obsolete spellings *tumb* and *tumbe* – 'grave' is a loan from Old French *tombe*. The final *-b* began to be mute in English in the early 14th century, but the spelling has survived and

since the 17th century has been the accepted form. *Tumba* was also borrowed into German where it means 'sarcophagus-like structure of a grave with a ledger'.

3.2.3. Indo-European *\*bhedh-* 'to prick, especially in the earth, to dig' (Pokorny 1959, 113f.), *\*b<sup>h</sup>ed<sup>h</sup>h<sub>2</sub>-* 'to prick, to dig' (Rix & Kümmel 2001, 66)

In Latin this root developed into *fodere*, *fōd(ī-* 'to dig', *fodicāre* 'to prick repeatedly' and *fossa* 'the ditch'; 'the pit'. One finds modern *fossa* with the meaning 'grave' in Catalan and Rhaeto-Romance.

With Bretonic *béz*, Welsh *bedd* and Cornish *bedh* also three Celtic languages possess words for 'grave' with the same root. The development came about via Gaulish *bedo-* 'ditch'.

Related forms are found in Hittite *paddai* 'digs', Old Church Slavonic *bodq* 'to prick', Lithuanian *bedù* 'to prick', 'to dig'; Gothic *badi* 'bed', Old High German *betti* 'bed' > Modern German *Bett* 'bed' and – since the 17th century – *Beet* 'garden bed' and Old English *bed(d* > Modern English *bed*. "The primitive notion 'a dug out place' had quite disappeared in Germanic, in which the word had only the two senses 'sleeping-place of men' and 'garden bed'. It is uncertain whether the latter came independently from the root idea of 'dig', or whether it was a transference from a bed for sleeping, with reference to its shape or purpose" (OED, 1989, 2: 44).

3.2.4. Indo-European *\*sep-* 'to occupy oneself with something', 'to honour something/someone' (Pokorny 1959, 909), 'to care about', 'to honour' (Rix & Kümmel 2001, 534), 'to pursue something with sincere sympathy' (Walde 1930-1956, 487)

From this root and its extension *\*sep-el* 'respect', 'care' Latin *sepelīre* 'to bury' ('to inter' or 'to burn') developed, which, in turn, also gave *sepultūra* 'burial', also 'burning' and *sepulcrum* 'grave', 'grave-mound'. Modern reflexes of these words can be found in almost all Romance languages, see Catalan *sepultura* or *sepulcre* (Corominas 1954, 28), Portuguese *sepultura* or *sepulcro* (Machado 1977, 182), Italian *sepoltura* or *sepolcro*, Spanish *sepultura* or *sepulcro* and French *sépulture* or *sépulcre*. English *sepulchre* 'a tomb or burial-place' and *sepulture* 'interment, burial', 'a burial-place, grave' are loans from Old French.

Connections exist with Sanscrit *sápati* 'caresses, cares' and with Old Persian *hapariya-* 'to show respect'.

3.2.5. Indo-European *\*(s)kep-*, *\*(s)kop-* or *\*(s)kap-* 'to cut with a sharp tool', 'to split' (Pokorny 1959, 930ff.), *\*(s)kep-* 'to hoe', 'to cut' (Rix & Kümmel 2001, 555)

Here we have a case of the so-called mobile *s*. When Indo-European *s* formed the first

member of an initial consonant group, it was an unstable sound and liable to disappear under conditions which have not yet been accurately defined.

Old Prussian *enkopts* 'to bury', Lithuanian *kāpas* and Latvian *kaps*, both meaning 'grave (-mound)', go back to this root. There is Greek (σ)κάπετος 'ditch', 'grave' and Old Church Slavonic *kopajǫ*, *kopati* 'to dig' (Fraenkel 1962-1965, 217). Polish *kapi* 'churchyard' or Russian *kopa* 'heap, stack' must also be mentioned in this connection.

3.2.6. Indo-European \**uer-* 'to lock, to cover, to guard, to save' (Pokorny 1959, 1160f.), 'to protect', 'to save' (Rix & Kümmel 2001, 684f.)

The Albanian deverbial noun *varr/vorr* 'grave' developed from this root (\**uornā*). *Varr* is the southern or Tosk dialectal variant, whereas *vorr* is the northern or Geg form. There is a connection with Albanian *vathë* 'enclosure' and probably also with Albanian *birë* 'hole' and *grovërë* 'pit' (Meyer 1982, 37).

From this root also developed, inter alia, Middle Irish *fert* 'grave-mound (closed with stones)' (> Modern Irish *fert* 'grave[-mound]'), Gothic *warjan*, Old Norse *verja*, Old English *werian* > Modern English *to ware* (the Old English meanings 'to guard', 'to defend' did not survive into Middle English) and Old High German *werian* > Modern German *wehren* 'to defend', 'to protect'.

3.2.7. Indo-European \**men-* 'to think, to be mentally excited' (Pokorny 1959, 726ff. and Rix & Kümmel 2001, 435f.)

This root developed into Greek *μέμνά* 'desire, remember', Oscan *memnim* 'memorial' and Latin *meminī* 'remember' and *monumentum/monimentum* 'memorial', 'something that reminds', 'tomb'. Romanian *mormânt*<sup>27</sup> and Romani *morminto*, both meaning 'grave', are derived from the last-mentioned word (Meyer-Lübke 1972, 465, Cihac 1978, 170 and Wolf 1960, 154). Latin *monumentum/monimentum* also found its way into Welsh, cf. *mynwent* 'graveyard', and into English. The earliest recorded sense of *monument* in English, now obsolete, was 'a sepulchre, place of sepulchre'. 1300 is the first attestation listed in the OED, 1658 the last in this meaning. The sense 'a structure of stone or other lasting material erected in memory of the dead, either over the grave or in some part of a sacred edifice' was adopted in English much later, according to the OED only in the late 16th century (OED, 1989, 9: 1045, *sb.* 1 and 5b).

Related expressions exist in a number of Indo-European languages, such as Sanscrit *manyate* 'thinks' and *mānas-* 'sense', Armenian *i-manam* 'understand', Old Irish *do-moiniur* 'believe, mean', Lithuanian *menù* 'to remember' and *manyti* 'to understand', Latvian *minēt* 'to remember' and Old Church Slavonic *po-тънѣти* 'to remember'.

### 3.2.8. Indo-European \**mogh-* 'big, strong, heavy' (Wade 1999, 123)

Wade sees a connection between this Indo-European root and present-day Russian *mogila* 'grave', namely via Old Church Slavonic *mogiti* 'to be able to'. However, he also mentions alternatives and alludes to possible connections with Arabic *maghārah* 'cave', Albanian *gamulë* (with g-m/m-g metathesis) 'mound of various kinds' and Romanian *măgură* 'mound'.

Vasmer (1950-1959, 144) on the other hand places Old Russian *mogyła* 'grave-mound' together with Old Church Slavonic *mogyła* 'mound', Bulgarian *mogila* 'mound', Serbian and Croatian *gòmila* or *mògila* 'heap of earth', Slovenian *gomila* 'heap of earth', Czech and Slovak *mohyla* 'heap of earth', 'grave-mound' and Polish *mogila* 'grave, grave-mound'. Today *mogila* is obsolete in Slovenian. The basic meaning of all these words was 'mound'. To these ought to be added as likely Slavic loanwords Romanian *măgură*, already mentioned above, and Albanian *gamulë* as well as *magulë* 'mound, a small hill' – the latter is a form of Albanian used in Greece. Moreover *mogila* is found today not only in Russian, as mentioned already, Ukrainian and Belorussian, but also in the Uralic Komi-Permyak where it must be considered as a loan from Russian.

### 3.2.9. Irish and Scottish Gaelic *uaigh*

Modern Irish and Scottish Gaelic *uaigh* 'grave' goes back to Old Irish *uag* which meant the same. *Uad* also exists, but this is only a Middle Irish graphic doublet of *uag*. Several etymologists explain it as an old word for 'eye'. In a number of languages 'eye' served to designate a hole, an opening, as in Old Irish *derc* (> Modern Irish *dearc*), Greek *ὄπή*, Gothic *augo-dauro* 'window', Old Icelandic *vind-auga* 'window', Sanscrit *grhāksa-* 'window' (literally 'eye of the house'). This hypothesis, however, remains somewhat doubtful, as Gothic *augo* alone lends itself to several explanations (Vendryes 1978, U-2).

## 3.3. Non-Indo-European languages

In the case of loanwords Non-Indo-European languages have already occasionally been mentioned.

### 3.3.1. Basque

Apart from the Romance loans *tonba* and *tunba* 'grave', Basque has *hilobi* 'grave', 'burying place' and *hilarri* 'sepulchre'. Both nouns derive from the base *hil* that as a verb means 'to die, to kill' and as an adjective 'dead, peaceful, quiet' (Kühnel 1999, 33). Whereas *-obi* is a suffix, *harri* means 'stone'. Löpeltmann (1968, 518f.) sees the origin of *hil* in Aegean that came into Basque via Iberian mediation. Evidence for this is the similarity of Iberian *ildu* with Basque *il du* 'he killed him'. Furthermore there are connections with Etruscan *hil* or *il*

'to kill, to sacrifice' and Hebrew *hilel* 'to pierce', 'to injure'.

### 3.3.2. Finno-ugric languages:

#### 3.3.2.1. Finnish and Estonian

In Finnish there is only one word for 'grave', namely *hauta*. According to the most recent Finnish etymological dictionary (Kulonen 1992, 148) *hauta* has equivalents with the same meaning in all the Finnic languages: Ingrian *hauta*, Veps *haud*, *houd*, Karelian *hauda*, Votic *auta*, Estonian *haud* and Livonian *ōda*. The word has an etymological counterpart also in Lappish: Norwegian Lappish *haw'de*, which is believed to be a Finnish loan, and Swedish Lappish *saude* 'tar pit'. 'Tar pit' is also in Finnish *tervahauta*, that is 'tar grave'. *Hauta* might be a loanword from Proto-Germanic *\*sauþa* > Proto-Finnic *\*savta* 'grave' (Koivulehto 1976). Proto-Germanic *\*sauþa* developed into Old English *sēaþ* 'pit, grave'; 'well' > Modern English *seath* 'pit, hole, well, pool', now obsolete.

Like Finnish *hauta* Estonian *haud* is found in all netpoints of the European linguistic atlas. As secondary responses there are some compounds in Estonian, for instance *surnuhaud*, *surnehaud* < *surnu* 'dead, corpse', actually a past participle of the verb *surra* 'to die', which is of Finno-ugric origin + *haud*, and *kooljahaud*, *kooluhaud* < *koolja* 'dead person, deceased', a deverbal noun of the verb *koolda* 'to die', which is of Uralic origin + *haud*.

3.3.2.2. In Hungarian 'grave' is *sír*; the etymology of which is unknown. However, there is an attempt to relate *sír* to the Finno-ugric period and explain it as inherited from that base language, but there are etymological and phonetic difficulties. *Sír* was first attested in 1055 with the same meaning the word has today, namely 'grave, grave-mound'. Moreover, there are two compounds for this notion: *sírgődör* (Benkő 1993-1997, 472 and 1332) where *gődör* means 'valley', hollow' (first attestation 1251), 'great hole' (1566), 'grave' (1777) and *sírhalom* with *halom* meaning 'small mound' (1055) and since the 16th century 'heap, quantity, thrust'.

#### 3.3.3. Semitic/Maltese

'Grave' is *qabar* in Maltese, which comes from Arabic *qabr* 'grave'. This is a deverbal noun which is derived from the verb *qabara* 'to bury'. In the past, Romance/Italian *tomba* seems to have been used in restricted circles, too; it is extant in the place-name *It-Tomba*, found in Victoria, Gozo. The place-name is associated with a square where there was once a medieval cemetery.

### 3.3.4. Altaic languages, especially Turkish

A number of words meaning 'grave' exist in Old Osman, in the Turkish literary language and in Turkish dialects. Among the Old Osman words mention must be made of *delik* < *delük* 'hole', *eşin* < *eş* 'to dig', *kara ev*: literally 'black house', *karanı*: literally 'darkness', *kör* < a loanword from Persian *gūr* 'grave', *sin* < originally a loanword from Chinese *ts'in* 'inner room of an ancestral hall', 'tomb, sepulchre' and *yér karın?* literally 'earth-belly' (*yér* 'earth' + *karın* 'belly' + ?= possessive ending of the 3rd pers. sing.).

Expressions for 'grave' in the Turkish literary language are: *mezar* < Arabic *mazar* 'place of pilgrimage', 'sanctuary' < Arabic *zāra* 'to visit' and *meşhet* 'grave of a martyr' < Arabic *maşhad*. In Turkish dialects the following words are attested for 'grave': *gömgen* < Turkish *göm-* 'to bury' + *gen*, which is a rare word-formation element, *görüin* < a loanword from Persian *gūr* 'grave' + an unidentifiable second element, *kara yér*: literally 'black earth' (*kara* 'black' and *yér* 'earth'), *sin* < Old Turkish *sin*, which is a loanword from Chinese *ts'in* 'inner room of an ancestral hall', 'tomb, sepulchre', *teşik* < *teşik* 'hole' and *yağ'z yér*: literally 'dark-brown earth' (*yağ'z* 'dark, dark-brown' and *yér* 'earth').

## 4. Semantic considerations

In most Indo-European languages – and beyond – the nouns were derived from a verb, as the designations for 'grave' go back to the activity that was necessary to produce one. All the Germanic languages belong to this large group and, with few exceptions, in the Slavonic languages all the corresponding expressions go back to the same root (cf. 3.2.1). Also those words that are derived from *\*bhedh-/ \*b<sup>h</sup>ed<sup>h</sup>h<sub>2</sub>-* and *\*(s)kep* belong to this group (cf. 3.2.3 and 3.2.5). In one way or another the act of digging is the basis of the word. One can conclude with reasonable certainty, therefore, that in the respective countries the dead body was laid in a hole in the ground that had previously been dug. The Anglo-Saxons, by the way, dug a rather deep rectangular grave, often of considerable dimensions.

Also in other languages deverbal nouns exist where, however, the act of digging is not expressed. In the case of the root *\*tjem-* the original verb is not to be taken literally as nothing really swells (cf. 3.2.2). Rather one must assume that tumuli were the basis of this root that looked like a swell in the fields. In contrast to, for instance, *\*ghrebh-/ ?\*g<sup>h</sup>reb<sup>h</sup>-* a hole was probably not dug first, but the dead body was covered with earth from which a mound resulted that looked like a swell. The same can be said of the root of Russian *mogila*, if one follows Vasmer's interpretation (cf. 3.2.8). Albanian *gamulë* or *magulë* also belong here.

From verbs are also derived those nouns that go back to the roots *\*sep-*, *uer-* and *\*men-* (cf. 3.2.4, 3.2.6 and 3.2.7). Here, however, acts and feelings are expressed that

describe how one should treat dead persons, namely to honour, to cover, to guard or to remember them.

If one follows Wade (1999) and traces Russian *mogila* that is also found in other Slavic languages back to the root *\*mogh-*, this would be an exception within the Indo-European language family as this expression would then derive from an adjective and not from a verb (cf. 3.2.8). Wade sees the connection between a grave and the adjectives 'big, strong, heavy' in the description of a grave either as a dominating spot or as a place where the strong, powerful people, that is the Slavic élite, lie buried.

Also in Maltese, Turkish and Basque deverbal nouns are attested. It is striking that only in Basque the meaning of the verbal root is connected with death (cf. 3.3.1). In this Basque differs clearly from all other languages mentioned where death plays no role in designating the grave.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> On the origins of geolinguistics cf. Viereck (1973). As a first step towards a world linguistic atlas cf now Dryer et al. (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless its set-up is basically national. At present there are 39 states of importance in Europe, but altogether 70 peoples live on the continent. As a compromise the ALE has 47 national committees. The number of peoples is still much higher. Whether and, if so, how they are represented in the project depends on how the states treat their minorities. On the wider and lesser used languages in Europe and the statuses of the latter, cf. the maps of Escarré's International Center for Ethnical Minorities and Nations in Barcelona and those in Goebel 1997.

<sup>3</sup> There is no room to discuss such vast problems here. For a linguistic criticism of Renfrew's views cf. Meid (1989); for a criticism of Linguistic Paleontology cf. Alinei (1991). In this connection mention should also be made of the—heavily criticized—nostratic theory (on which see, e.g. Shevoroshkin 1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1992), of the typology of linguistic universals, and of the *Sprachbünde*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., e.g., the contributions in *Fennoscandia archeologica* 4 (1987), 6 (1989), Sammallahti (1995) and Siiriäinen (1995).

<sup>5</sup> Mallory's map (1989, 144) is quite revealing in this context. It presents some of the solutions to the Indo-European homeland problem proposed since 1960.

<sup>6</sup> Loanwords usually belong to the historical period and are thus too young. Reconstructed roots involve very early periods but are usually motivationally opaque and thus not very revealing for a cultural analysis.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Beth (1936/2000) and Markey (1983,1985). There are, of course, more classes of realia. For names of diseases cf. W. Viereck & K. Viereck 1999, for names of bread cf. Viereck 2000 and for names of children's games cf. Viereck 2003. The model used was the same as that presented here.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dutch *botervlieg*, German *Butterfliege*. The OED surprisingly notes "The reason of the name is unknown" (s. v. 'butterfly'). In the Germanic area the belief was widespread that witches in the appearance of butterflies stole butter, milk and cream. Compounds with *butter-* occur most often. Dutch *boterhex*, *boterwif* – designations belonging to the anthropomorphic layer – clearly point to the belief in witches. (On the butterfly more generally see Manos-Jones 2000).

<sup>9</sup> See the long lists in Barros Ferreira & Alinei (1990) also with regard to other motivations.

<sup>10</sup> This is also true of some animal names (cf. EDD, s.v. 'priest' 3).

<sup>11</sup> Ashley (1974) provides additional plant names of the British Isles (and not only for the

Christian layer). Alinei (1997) found basically the same motivations in Italy and provides many examples.

<sup>12</sup> See Alinei (1983).

<sup>13</sup> The investigator labeled this form as 'jocular' and thus modern, which, of course, it is not.

<sup>14</sup> Similarly the address in German *Frau Sonne*. With regard to the sun Tuailon notes: "Il est sans doute regrettable que le genre ne soit pas indiqué; cette donnée aurait peut-être, en domaine germanique du moins, montré quelques régions qui donnent au soleil un autre genre que celui de la langue nationale" (1983, 5) [It is no doubt regrettable that the gender was not indicated; this notion would perhaps have shown some regions, at least in the Germanic area, that attributed to the sun a gender different from that of the national language]. Also for the moon the gender in the various languages was not noted. Cf. fn. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Taboo motivations also belong here, as Italian *donnola* 'little woman' or French *belette* 'little beautiful woman', both names for the weasel.

<sup>16</sup> On Slavic *baba* ('Old Woman')-formations cf. Alinei (1988).

<sup>17</sup> See also Frazer, Vols. 5,1 and 5,2 (1913/1990) and Beitzl (1933/2000) on this notion.

<sup>18</sup> That women played a central role also in other parts of the world is attested, e.g., by rock paintings in Namibia in Africa where women are depicted in scenes that suggest a ritual or ceremonial background. A matriarchal social order still exists today in, e.g., Micronesia where only women may own land. Despite a US influence of over half a century an animistic religion is still to be found there among the older population.

<sup>19</sup> Also outside Europe the butterfly was important. In Haida myth, a First Nations people in western Canada, Eagle, that is the travelling companion of Raven, is replaced by butterfly (MacDonald 1983, 14).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Old English *béomodor* 'beemother'.

<sup>21</sup> On dating the rainbow as a 'drinking animal' cf. Alinei (1997). In addition it is worth mentioning that the rainbow as a drinking animal is attested also beyond Europe in Japan and in China. In Chinese culture it is a double-headed dragon drinking water on both sides of the river. Also, in the culture of the First Nations peoples in America the rainbow played an important role, as is evidenced, e.g., by rainbow poles of the Haida. (On the rainbow in general see Lee & Fraser 2001).

<sup>22</sup> "In Africa, lightning is often perceived as an animal, usually a quadruped or a bird" (Lagercrantz 1999, 170). On the map on p. 163 the areal distribution of the following lightning animals, among others, is shown: hen and cock, bird, goat, elephant, dog, hare, squirrel and lion.

<sup>23</sup> Leo Frobenius, the founder of cultural morphology, noted already in 1929, 248 ff.:

"...daß einer Periode des Anthropomorphismus eine ältere der Tieranpassung vorangegangen sein müsse" [...that a period of anthropomorphism must have been preceded by an older one of zoomorphism].

<sup>24</sup> The explanation, sometimes advanced, that this custom refers to the biblical passage "Christus mansionem benedicat" rather than to the three holy kings is highly improbable. This possibility is not even alluded to in such reference works as Erich & Beitz (1981).

<sup>25</sup> I am thinking of work similar to that by Frobenius who, in 1929, was concerned with the gender of the sun and the moon and presented three cosmogonic groups with insightful maps world-wide in which the sun and the moon were linked with 'man and wife', with 'brother and sister' and with 'twin brothers'. The last-mentioned was to him the oldest view of life. Unfortunately, some of Frobenius' interpretations were tied to the prevailing thoughts of the time and can thus not be accepted.

<sup>26</sup> I would like to thank Enver Hysa, Jenő Kiss, Vilja Oja, Sirkka Saarinen, Jožika Škofic, Semih Tezcan, Andreas Wagener, Joe Watson and Joe Zammit Ciantar for their kind assistance.

<sup>27</sup> In Romania different orthographic rules prevailed at different times: Before the Second World War the word was written *mormânt*, during the second half of the 20th century *mormînt*, and today again *mormânt* (I thank Nicolae Saramandu for this information).

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