LINGUISTICS

INSIGHTS INTO THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF EUROPE AS PROVIDED BY THE *ATLAS LINGUARUM EUROPAE*[1]

WOLFGANG VIERECK

University of Bamberg

1. Europe and the *Atlas Linguarum Europae*: some background information

Whichever notion one consults in the European linguistic atlas, one is confronted with a number of responses that, at first sight at least, are surprising and it is difficult to see how they relate to the notion in question. Such is, for example, the case when for Christmas we find answers such as 'Easter', 'Little Easter' or 'log' in a number of languages. Here the categorisation of the English *Christmas* is much simpler, of course. Before we turn to these individual responses, some general information on the *Atlas Linguarum Europae* (ALE) seems to be in order.

The *Atlas Linguarum Europae* has been in existence for three decades now. Recently a new introduction was published (Alinei – Viereck 1997 [1998b]) as well as the fifth fascicle of commentaries and maps (Alinei – Viereck 1997 [1998b]). The sixth fascicle is in press (Viereck 2002) and the seventh is finished in manuscript.

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. The ALE is the first continental linguistic atlas with its frontiers being neither political nor linguistic but simply geographic. The choice of the continent has nothing to do with Eurocentrism but only follows from the present state of research.

---

[1] Shortened version of a paper read at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, on November 8, 2001 in connection with the "80 years of English Studies" celebrations.

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, 22 language groups in total, such as Germanic and Slavic, can be counted. These, in turn, consist of many individual languages. It thus becomes apparent that the demands on scholars to interpret the heterogeneous data collected in 2,631 localities from Iceland to the Ural mountains are very high indeed. It is always the oldest vernacular words that are looked for in the various languages. These are, then, put on symbol maps and interpreted either synchronically or diachronically as the cases require.

The ALE is, primarily, an interpretative word atlas. It uses both traditional and innovative methods. Among the former, onomasiology and semasiology must be mentioned. In onomasiology one elicits from informants the designations of certain objects etc., while in semasiology one asks for different meanings of a single form. Motivational mapping, however, is an innovative manner of interpreting geolexical data. It goes beyond an interest in etymology and asks for the causes or 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 motivation. 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 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 archaeologists and geneticists join forces with linguists, as the works of Renfrew (1987), Cavalli-Sforza and Ammerman (1984), Sokal, Oden and Thompson (1992) as well as of Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995) reveal. In this connection mention should also be made of the nostratic theory, of the typology of linguistic universals, and of the *Sprachbünde*. In the Uralic area the Continuity Theory, first advanced by archaeologists, then by linguists, seems now accepted by the majority of specialists. According to this theory Uralic peoples and their languages have lived in their present historical territories since the Mesolithic Age. Alinei (1996) adopts a similar approach for Indo-European arguing that there was never an Indo-European invasion and that Indo-European languages followed the same diffusion pattern as the Uralic languages, thus diverging sharply from the many solutions to the Indo-European homeland problem postulated in the literature (cf. Mallory 1989). If people did not migrate, how did conceptions wander, one might ask. We find the same conceptions in every society irrespective of the languages peoples speak. I will address this aspect below.

As regards the ALE, insights into Europe's cultural past follow less from loanwords and from reconstructed roots, although the project also has important contributions to its credit in these two areas. Loanwords usually belong to the historical period and are thus too young, while reconstructed roots involve very early periods but are usually motivationally opaque and thus not very revealing for a cultural analysis. Insights into Europe's cultural past rather follow from motivations in so far as they are transparent. This is an important point, as formal differences between languages can thus be ignored and the focus is solely on identity or similarity of cultural representations of reality. In what follows I will draw mainly on ALE data but also on my own research in illustrating Europe's cultural history.

Of the manifold motivations for designating realia not all are relevant in this specific context. To give one example: the plant Leontodon Taraxacum is called *dandelion* in English, *Löwenzahn* in German and *pissenlit* in French. The first two names are motivated by the shapes of the leaves of the flower (French *dent-de-lion* 'lion's tooth' > English *dandelion*), while the third name refers to the medical consequences of the plant.

2. Cultural history and religion

As religion is the basis of every culture, the frame of reference here is the history of religions. The religious 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" was introduced by the Romans much later. As any class of realia, such as plants, animals and natural phenomena including the 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 so-called primitive societies this is still observable today. 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 [2000]). His insights as well as Riegler's (1937 [2000]) are of great importance in interpreting the geodialectal 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 separate layers can be distinguished.

The layer that can be recognised and dated most easily belongs to history, namely to Christianity and Islam. As this is the most recent level, it also occurs most 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.

In the pre-historical period two levels can be distinguished, one characterised by "supernatural", "superhuman" pagan figures and, leaving anthropomorphism, the other by still earlier zoomorphic and kinship representations. As early as in 1929, Leo Frobenius, the founder of cultural morphology, noted "that a period of anthropomorphism must have been preceded by an older one of zoomorphism" (1929: 248 f., translated from German). The basic structure has remained the same from pre-historical to historical times.

While dating the first-mentioned layer is unproblematic, Alinei assumes "that the anthropomorphic representations of reality are 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*" (1997: 27).

Unlike vertical dead archaeological stratigraphies, linguistic stratigraphies as presented on ALE motivational maps are horizontal and all the above layers are still alive.

2.1. The Christian/Muslim layer

> Curiously enough, it is not from a map such as 'Christmas' ... that we can draw linguistic evidence for a Christian culture in Europe (except of course for the obvious diffusion – or absence in the Islamic areas – of the referent). The strongest evidence for the identification of a Christian (and Muslim) layer, spread all over Europe, comes from ALE motivational maps which have nothing to do with Christendom or Islam: those of the 'lady-bird' ... of other insects ... and of the 'rainbow' ... . Why these? Because the referents belong to two notional categories – wild animals and natural phenomena – which are often associated with magico-religious names (Alinei 1997 [1998a]: 3).

From the many examples only the following were selected due to restrictions of time. Among animals the butterfly is interesting. The OED surprisingly notes: "The reason of the name is unknown" (*s.v.* 'butterfly'). However, 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, see Dutch *botervlieg* 'butterfly', German *Butterfliege* 'butterfly' and English *butterfly*. Dutch *boterhex*, *boterwijf*, both 'butterwitch', clearly point to the belief in witches. However, the butterfly is christianised in Europe, too, mainly in the South as 'little angel' or 'the pope's wife', but also in Finland as 'Brigit's bird'.

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* 'Mary

hen', French *poulette au bon Dieu* 'good God's young hen'), a cow (English *lady-cow* or *cow-lady*, Russian *bozhia korovka* 'God's cow', French *vache à Dieu* 'God's cow', Italian *vacheta de la Madóna* 'young cow of the Holy Virgin'), an ox (Spanish *buey de Dios* 'God's ox'), a beetle (German *Marienkäfer* 'Mary beetle', English *lady-bug*) or, more generally, a little animal (Dutch [*Onze*] *Lieveheersbeestje* 'Our Lord's little animal'). The religious being or notion can be 'God' – only additional examples are listed below – (Spanish *arca de Dios* 'God's chest', Breton [*aotrou*] *doue* 'God', 'The Lord'), 'angel' (Breton *elik doue* 'God's little angel'), 'Jesus' (Swedish *Jesu vallflicka* 'Jesus' shepherd'), '(Virgin) Mary' (Swedish *jungfru maria nyckelpiga* 'Virgin Mary's key servant', Italian *anima de la Madóna* 'soul of the Holy Virgin', French *bête de la vierge* 'animal of the Holy Virgin', English *Virgin Mary, Sunny Mary*), or the names of saints such as, in Italy, *San Martino, San Gioani, San Nicola*, in France, *Saint Jean, Saint Jacques, Sainte Catherine*, in Spain, *San Anton*, and in Ukraine, *Patrick*. In the Muslim area we find 'Allah', 'mosque' and 'Fatimah', the name of the daughter of Mohammed.

The glow-worm appears as 'Saint John', 'Saint John's bonfire', 'Saint John's light', 'Saint John's sparkle', for example, in Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, Corsican, Danish, German, Hungarian, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Nakho-Dagestanian, French and Spanish.

For plants the religious motivations are more numerous. That the proof of 'language as a mirror of the history of religions' is possible so convincingly in botany is due to the founder of modern botany, Carl von Linné. He laid down the rules for naming plants and decided to keep all those names of plants that had been named after kings, gods or Christian saints. The pansy (Viola tricolor) may be called *Heiliges Dreifaltigkeitsblümchen* 'little Holy Trinity flower' in German and 'Anne's eyes' in Russian. 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. Among the plants named after Christian saints may also be noted Latin *herba sancti Johannis* 'Saint John's wort', German *Johanniskraut* 'John's wort', English *Saint John's wort* (Hypericum); *Saint Bridget's anemone* (Anemone coronarea), *Saint Bruno's lily* (Paradisea liliastrum), *Saint Bernard's lily* (Anthericum liliago), *Saint Dabeoc's heath* (Dabæcia cantabrica), *Saint George's beard* (Sempervivum tectorum) and *Saint Barnaby's thistle* (Centaurea solstitalis). In English quite a number of plant names refer to the Virgin Mary, such as *Our Lady's bedstraw* (Galium) and *Lady's candlesticks* (Primula). The milk thistle (Silybum marianum) is *Lady's thistle, Marian thistle, Mary thistle* in English and *Mariendistel* 'Mary thistle' in German.

Plant names can also change in the course of time. Examples in point are the wild clary (Salvia verbenaca) that was named *Oculus Christi* by William Turner,

who published the first scientific botanical treatise in England in 1538 or *Holy oke*, also Turner's name, for today's marsh-mallow (Althaea officinalis).

Natural phenomena as well as planets also testify to a Christianisation and Islamisation in Europe. The classic example of 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, for example, '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'. An example from Latvian (*dieva juosta* 'God's belt') must suffice here. 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. Also the moon once had a religious veneration, still discernible in Hungarian *istenkalácsa* 'God's cake'. The investigator labelled this form as 'humorous' and thus modern, which it is not. For thunder a Christian motivation was noted for Karelian, namely 'Holy Elias'. Even Christmas belongs to the natural phenomena as the pre-Christian winter solstice underlies the Christian feast. Not unsurprisingly, therefore, only a few names for Christmas have a Christian motivation, such as 'Christ mass', 'Christ birth', 'Christ day', attested in German, English, Dutch, Spanish, Basque, Sardinian, Greek and Albanian.

Apart from the names that refer to Christ himself, 'Easter' is also of Christian origin, mostly attested as 'Little Easter' in southern Europe. Here the pre-Christian influence becomes noticeable, as in pagan times there were two important feasts in the[course of the year. To call Christmas 'Little Easter' shows that the more important of the two was that in spring and summer, the real Easter.

In parts of Italy, for instance, 'log' also means Christmas – this is, of course, pre-Christian. It denoted the fires to celebrate the winter and summer solstice. Of these mainly, if not solely, the fires lit on St. John's Day have remained today in many parts of Europe. Since Christianisation was more successful with the winter solstice, such fires are encountered today much more rarely. Expressions such as the English *Yule-log* and German *Christusklotz* or *Julblock* for Christmas point to that old custom and are a sign of the mixing of different religious conceptions.

We even meet supernatural powers in christianised form. Thus the corn spirit appears in Switzerland as *Michel* (after Saint Michael); it is also named *Oswald* (after Saint Oswald) in Lower Bavaria.

2.2. The anthropomorphic layer

The same notions that provide examples for the other layers can be drawn upon for this middle layer, which is both pre-Christian/pre-Islamic and post-zoomorphic.

Animals provide quite a number of magico-religious names. For the weasel there is 'fairy' in English, 'witch' in French and Italian, 'Diana' in Sardinian, *wildes Fräulein* 'wild demoiselle', a member of the magic *wilde Leute*, in German and 'domestic genius' in Russian. Also taboo motivations belong here, such as Italian *donnola* 'little woman' or French *belette* 'little beautiful woman', both names for the weasel. The lady-bird is associated with the Finno-Ugrian god *Ukko* 'the Old Man', in Frisian with the elf *Puken* 'puck', in Southern Italy with the elf *Monachello*, in Rumanian with *Paparuga* and 'witch' and in Greek with the *Moira*. The butterfly appears in Austria as 'the forest's elf' and in Russian as *babochka* (from the goddess *Baba* 'Old Woman'). The grasshopper may be 'pregnant mother' and 'lady' in Italian and 'demoiselle' in French. These names point to "an earlier, no longer recognizable sacred female being" (Alinei 1997 [1998a]: 6). The motivation for the smallest pig of the litter in Ireland is 'fairy' (*sióg* and *siabhra*). The same motivation is attested in England for the glow-worm (*fairy lanthorn*), while 'witch' is noted there for the swallow (*witch-hag*). The pig is *mucc* in Old Irish and *moch* in Old Breton. These words derive from *Moccus*, a Gallo-Latin name of a god, and ultimately from *Mercurius*.

In the case of plants, the motivation 'fairy' occurs in England for the cowslip (Primula veris – *fairy cups*), the dwarf or purging flax (Linum catharticum – *fairy flax*) and the purple foxglove (Digitalis purpurea) as *fairy petticoats*, *fairy bell*, *fairy cap* and *fairy thimble*. The latter is also attested in Ireland and Scotland together with *fairy finger*. The bending of the tall stalks of this plant is believed to denote the unseen presence of supernatural beings. 'Witch' is noted in English dialects, apart from the purple foxglove, Digitalis purpurea (*witch['s] thimble*), for the mountain ash, Pyrus Aucuparia (*witch-beam*), the harebell, Campanula rotundifolia, and the corn bluebottle or bluebonnet, Centaurea cyanus, both called *witch bells*, and the dandelion (Leontodon Taraxacum) is called *witch-gowan* in England and Scotland. In Ukrainian the dandelion is named *kulbaba*, referring to the goddess *Baba* 'Old Woman' and to the figure old women may have. The EDD notes 'Jupiter' for the common house-leek (Sempervivum tectorum) as *Jupiter's beard* – the same motivation is attested in Italian for this plant. In both languages we find the motivation 'Venus' for the Dipsacus sylvestris (*Venus's basin*, *Venus's bath* in English). The monkshood (Aconitum napellus) is named *Venus' doves* in English dialects. In Ukrainian and Russian the daffodil (Narcissus Pseudo-Narcissus) is called *nartsis*, in German *Narzisse*. More examples of mythical beings as name-givers of plants are, for example, *Adonisröschen* 'Adonis' or *Daphne* (Daphne mezereum) in German. Also in English this plant is called *daphne*. In English *Adonis* and *Andromeda* are designations of whole genera of plants, N.O. Ranunculaceæ and N.O. Ericaceæ, respectively.

In Grape Hyacinth (*Muscari atlanticum Boiss and Reut.*) the British recall the beautiful lover of Apollo from whose blood, the myth says, sprang the flower, and Apollo was also connected ... with Mount Parnassus ..., whence Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassa palustris*). Iris, goddess of the rainbow, daughter of Electra, messenger of Zeus and his wife Hera, has a whole botanical *genus* to herself and various irises grow wild in the British Isles in addition to the many varieties imported for the gardens (Ashley 1974: 117 f.).

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 'Old Woman'. *Cailleach* and *carlin* occur in Scotland, too. Moreover, *maid(en)* is noted in both countries for this notion, as is *Kornjungfer* 'corn maid' in German. A mythical 'Old Man' (*der Alte, der Kornalte, der Kornmann*) is widespread in Germany, as is a mythical 'Old Woman' (*die Alte, altes Weib, Gerstenweib* 'barley woman') (for more examples cf. Beitl 1933 [2000]). In parts of the adjoining Slavic area the corn spirit is called *baba* 'Old Woman' and *stary* 'Old Man' respectively.

Among natural phenomena and planets, the rainbow has anthropomorphic representations everywhere in Europe. In the Turkic area they are associated with Kalmuk Taengri, 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 and Slavic regions) and Soslan in Ossetian, often together with 'bow', 'belt' or 'ribbon'. For thunder as well as for lightning one encounters the Celtic storm-god Taranus, Germanic Thorr, Lithuanian Perkūnas, the Finno-Ugric Ukko, the Lapp Tiermes and the Slavic Perun. Names for cloud can be motivated by 'Old Man', as, for example, in Swedish. For the moon we find 'Old Man' in the Nenets area and 'hoary Old Man' in Ostyak and for the sun there is the sun-god Yarilo in Russian and in Ukrainian.

2.3. The zoomorphic layer

In the most archaic layer, 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. As this is the oldest layer, the evidence is, quite naturally, less overwhelming than for the two younger layers.

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. In Ireland we find *granny* 'grandmother' and in Germany *Mutter* 'mother', also in the compounds *Erntemutter* 'harvest mother', *Kornmutter* 'corn mother', moreover *Kind* 'child', also as *Erntekind* 'harvest child', *Braut* 'bride' and *Große Mutter* 'grandmother' as designations for this notion. The last corn sheaf was also named after those animals in the appearance of which this demon was imagined, namely *Bär* 'bear', *Bock* 'buck', *Hase* 'hare', *Rind* 'ox', *Kuh* 'cow', *Geiß* 'goat', *Hahn* 'cock', *Wolf* 'wolf' and *Kater* 'cat' in German. We find the same picture in the neighbouring Slavic area (see Beitl 1933 [2000]). 'Cat' is also attested in French (*chat*). *Gi(o)rria* 'hare', *hare's bite/ sheaf/seat/tail, rabbit, cow, hog, piardóg* 'crayfish' and *swallow* occur in Ireland. *Hare* is also noted in parts of England and Scotland for the last corn sheaf.

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]) noted that the totem animal in its original form is embodied by the 'mother' and by matrilinear kins. This is indeed what we most often find in European dialects. Thus the EDD attests twenty plant names with 'mother' and six with 'grandmother', but only one with 'father' and none with 'grandfather'. Many kinship names were recorded for the lady-bird: 'grandmother' in, for example, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian (Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian), Mordvinian, Udmurtian, Finnish and Komi-Zyrian, 'mother' in, for example, Rumanian, Belorussian, Tatar, Bashkirian and Livian, 'aunt' in German and Italian, 'bride and spouse' in, for example, Turkish, Albanian, Macedonian, Italian, 'sister-in-law' in Bulgarian. 'Grandfather' occurs in Swedish, Komi-Zyrian and Maltese and 'uncle' in Albanian for the same notion lady bird.

The butterfly as a relative appears as 'grandmother' in Rhaeto-Romance *mammadonna,* as 'mother' in German and Sardinian and as '(grand)father' in the Uralic area.

Kinship names for the weasel abound: ('little) bride' is attested, for example, in Turkish, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Italian, Greek, Albanian and German, 'godmother', for example, in Galician and in Spanish, 'daughter-in-law' in Portuguese, Occitan, Italian, Turkish and Hungarian, 'mother' in English (see Old English *bēomodor* 'beemother') 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 wolf appears as 'little brother' in Ukrainian and Russian and the fox as 'godfather' in German (both in Low German as *vaddermann voss* 'Mr. godfather fox' or in High German as *Herr gevatter* 'Mr. godfather'), as 'little sister' in Ukrainian and Russian and as *mon cousin* 'my cousin' in French. *Parent* 'relative' is a name for cuckoo in French 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 seem to play the same role in totemism. Some plants are given kinship names, others are associated with animals. The pansy (Viola tricolor) is called *Stiefmütterchen* 'little step mother' and *Stiefkind* 'step child' in German (Vetvichki 1987) and the dandelion (Leontodon Taraxacum) in Swedish *mammpap(p)or* 'dad of mamma' = 'grandpa' and in Belorussian 'grandma' and 'grandpa'. In Ukrainian the pansy has both kinship and animal names: 'brothers', 'brother and sister', 'orphan' and 'cuckoo birds' (Mamchur 1987). For England the EDD lists many plant names with, for example, the motivation 'pig', 'fox', 'goat', 'toad', 'cat' and 'horse'; see Alinei (1997: 25 f.) for corresponding Italian plant names. However, the magico-religious belief is not always clear. Thus, rather the resemblances between the appearance of the leaves and the claws of birds seem to have led to the English designations *bird's foot* (Ornithopus), *crowfoot* (Ranunculus) and *goosefoot* (Chenopodium).

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' in many European languages and dialects. Other zoomorphic representations appear with thunder, namely 'dragon' and 'serpent' and with lightning ('whale' and 'dolphin'). Mist is associated with the 'fox' and the 'wolf' in France and Germany and the 'eagle' with storms in Northern Europe.

2.4. 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 and finally by Christian and Islamic names – and this across all language and dialectal borders. Also designations for bread (cf. Viereck 2000) and names of diseases follow the same pattern (cf. Viereck – Viereck 1999).[2] Let me just mention the disease that is, most unfortunately, mentioned almost daily these days, namely Bacillus anthracis or *anthrax*. In Serbocroatian 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 also from the Neolithic Age were found (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. Only in the 8th century A.D. was the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* written in either Fulda or Mainz 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).

Saint 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[3] and 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.

---

[2] Unfortunately the ALE has no notion in the first-mentioned area and only one, a cold, in the second.

[3] 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 – Beitl (1981), *s.v.* 'Dreikönig'.

The ALE is naturally based on European dialects. The adopted motivational approach has uncovered 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 presented were complemented by insights gained in other cultures.

REFERENCES

Alinei, Mario
 1996 *Origini delle lingue d'Europa.* vol. 1: *La Teoria della continuità.* Bologna: Il Mulino.
 1997 "Magico-religious motivations in European dialects: A contribution to archaeolinguistics", *Dialectologia et Geolinguistica* 5: 3-30.
 1997 "The Atlas Linguarum Europae after a quarter century: A new presentation,", in: Mario Alinei – Wolfgang Viereck (eds.), 1-40.
 [1998]

Alinei, Mario – Wolfgang Viereck (eds.)
 1997 *Atlas Linguarum Europae.* vol. 1. Cinquième fascicule: *Commentaires* and *Cartes.* Rome: Poligrafico.
 [1998]

Ashley, Leonard R.N.
 1974 "Uncommon names for common plants: The onomastics of native and wild plants of the British Isles", *Names* 22: 111-128.

Bächtold-Stäubli, Hanns – Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (eds.)
 1927-1942 *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens.* 10 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter.
 [2000] [reprinted]

Beitl, Richard
 1933 "Korndämonen", in: Bächtold-Stäubli – Hoffmann-Krayer. vol. 5, 250-314.
 [2000] [reprinted]

Cavalli-Sforza, Luigi – Albert J. Ammerman
 1984 *The neolithic transition and the genetics of populations in Europe.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Donini, Ambrogio
 1977 *Enciclopedia delle religioni.* Milano: Teti.
 1984 *Lineamenti di storia delle religioni.* Roma: Editori Riuniti.

Erich, Oswald A. – Richard Beitl
 1974 *Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde.* (3 edition). Stuttgart: Kröner.
 [1981] [reprinted]

Frobenius, Leo
 1929 *Monumenta Terrarum. Der Geist über den Erdteilen.* (2 edition of *Festlandkultur* by the same author). Frankfurt: Buchverlag.

Gamkrelidze, Thomas V. – Vjaceslav V. Ivanov
 1995 *Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans.* 2 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter. [English translation of *Indoevropejskij jazyk i indoevropejcy.* 2 vols. Tbilisi: Izdat. Tbilisskogo Univ. 1984.]

Kim, Eun – Erwin Schadel – Uwe Voigt (eds.)
 1999 *Aktive Gelassenheit. Festschrift für Heinrich Beck zum 70. Geburtstag.* (Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik 17.) Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Mallory, J. P.
 1989 *In search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, archaeology and myth.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Mamchur, Fedir
 1987 *Zviv na polonyni veres.* Kiev: Molod.

Müller-Karpe, Hermann
 1998 *Grundzüge früher Menschheitsgeschichte.* 5 vols. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Müller-Kaspar, Ulrike
 1996 *Handbuch des Aberglaubens.* 3 vols. Wien: Tosa.

Propp, Vladimir
 1987 *Die historischen Wurzeln des Zaubermärchens.* München: Hanser. [German translation of *Istoričeskie korni volšebnoj skazki.* Leningrad: Izdat. Leningradskogo Gosud. Univ. 1946.]

Renfrew, Colin
 1987 *Archaeology and language: The puzzle of Indo-European origins.* London: Cape.

Riegler, Richard
 1937 "Tiergestalt" and "Tiernamen", in: Bächtold-Stäubli – Hoffmann-Krayer. vol. 8, 819-842, 863-901.
 [2000] [reprinted]

Simpson, J.A. – E.S.C. Weiner (comp.)
 1989 *The Oxford English dictionary* (OED). 20 vols. (2 edition). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sokal, Robert R. – Neal L. Oden – Barbara A. Thomson
 1992 "Origins of the Indo-Europeans: Genetic evidence", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 89: 7669-7673.

Turner, William
 1538 *Libellus de re herbaria novus.* (edited with translation into English by Mats Rydén, Hans Helander, Kerstin Olsson). Uppsala: Swedish Science Press 1999 (= Acta Societatis Litterarum Humaniorum Regiae Upsaliensis 50).

Vetvichki, Vazlav
 1987 *Rasteniâ lesov i polej.* Prague: Artia.

Viereck, Wolfgang
 2000 "Bemerkungen zur Kulturgeschichte Europas", *Posvećeno Pavlu Iviću. Južnoslovenski filolog* 56: 1331-1342.
 2002 *Atlas Linguarum Europae.* Vol.1. Sixième fascicule: *Commentaires* and *Cartes.* Rome: Poligrafico.

Viereck, Wolfgang – Karin Viereck
 1999 "'Die seltzamen namen all'. Zu einigen Ergebnissen des Forschungsprojekts Atlas Linguarum Europae", in: Eun Kim – Erwin Schadel – Uwe Voigt (eds.), 711-723.

Wright, Joseph (ed.)
 1898-1905 *The English dialect dictionary* (EDD). 6 vols. London: Henry Frowde.