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A STRATIGRAPHIC AND STRUCTURAL APPROACH
TO THE STUDY OF MAGICO-RELIGIOUS MOTIVATIONS

The topic of this paper was chosen by my dear friend Pavle, when, in 1997, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts invited me to visit Yugoslavia and to give a lecture. On that for me unforgettable occasion Pavle introduced me to the distinguished audience, and also commented on my book on the origins of European languages (Alinei 1996a), which he had just read. This was the last time I saw him! I would like to honor his memory by publishing this lecture.

1. What is motivation?

I will not attempt to answer this question from a strictly theoretical point of view, as I have done this elsewhere (Alinei 1996b, 1997). I will rather approach the question empirically, by asking the reader to consider the familiar object which is usually defined as 'an instrument consisting of two lenses made of chrystal, to improve the eye-sight, which is hooked around the ears', and which in English is called *glasses* or *eye-glasses*. Why did the English call them this way? Because we usually name things by choosing one or two features, among those that make up the full conceptual representation of the object, as a shortcut to the designate the whole thing. We can say then that 'glass' is the motivation -or *iconym*[1]- of the name *glasses*, the meaning of which corresponds to the above-cited definition of the object.

2. Comparing motivations: onomasiological research

We can then compare the English name and the English motivation with the name and the motivation of the same object in other languages. In doing so, we enter a field of linguistics which is usually called *onomasio-*

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[1] In my theoretical work, I have proposed to replace the term *motivation* -much too ambiguous to be used in scientific discourse- with the term *iconym* and its derivations *iconimy, iconomastic* and the like. In this article, however, I will keep to the traditional usage.

logy, and which can be further specified as *motivational onomasiology*. Let us see how. In German, for example, glasses are called *Brille*, and the motivation is the name of the chrystal 'beryl'. In Italian, the motivation of *occhiali* is the name of the eyes, *occhi*. The same is true of Russian *očki*, Turkish *gözlük*, Hungarian *szemüveg*, Finnish *silmaläsit*, which are all based on the the same motivation 'eye', expressed by a phonologically different word. In Spanish, the motivation of the word *lentes* is 'lens', and that of the word *gafas* 'hook'. Lastly, in French the motivation of the word *lunettes* is 'small moons', for which a metaphore for the roundness of the lenses has been chosen, instead of one of the conceptual features.

3. Synchronic and diachronic relationships between coexisting motivations

Let us take a more complex example, which brings us closer to our topic: the names of the two days of the week 'Saturday' and 'Sunday'. In English these two concepts are motivated by an ancient, pre-Christian religious representation of the weekdays, by which *Saturday* was considered the day consecrated to Saturnus, and *Sunday* the day consecrated to the Sun. This kind of motivation is similar to that of all other names of the weekdays, for *Monday* was consecrated to the Moon, *Tuesday* to the god Tis, *Wednesday* to Wotan, *Thursday* to Thor, *Friday* to Freya. But if we now take the French days of the week, on the one hand we have the same kind of motivation in *lundi*, day consecrated to the Moon, *mardi*, to Mars, *mercredi*, to Mercurius, *jeudi* to Jovis, *vendredi* to Venus; on the other we have *samedi* and *dimanche*, with a different kind of motivation: *samedi* is motivated by the name of the Christian *sabbath*, and *dimanche* by the adjective *dominica*, referred to *dominus* 'lord, the Lord's day. So we can see that while English has retained the old, pre-Christian religious motivation for the whole week, French has more recently renamed the two holy days by means of a Christian motivation.

What is the difference between the motivations of the names of 'glasses' and that of the names of 'Saturday' and 'Sunday'? In the case of 'glasses', all motivations are synchronic, for they were chosen at the time of the invention of glasses, in the late Middle Ages. In the case of 'Saturday' and 'Sunday' some motivations go back to the pre-Christian period in which the days of the week were first institutionalized. Others, however, go back to a more recent time, i.e. to the beginning of the Christianization of Europe. In linguistic terms, we can express this difference by saying that the names of the 'glasses' are in a **synchronic onomasiological rela-**

tionship, in the case of 'Saturday' and 'Sunday' they are in a **diachronic onomasiological relationship**.

If we now look more closely to this diachronic relationship, we can see that it looks then like an archaeological stratigraphy, made of two layers: one Christian, one pre-Christian. This is why we can call it a **motivational stratigraphy**, and we can place its study within the field of historical linguistics or, more precisely, in a new branch of historical linguistic I have proposed to call **archaeolinguistics**.

4. The stratigraphic approach to magico-religious motivations: the case of the 'rainbow'

My research on magico-religious motivations began within the framework of the *Atlas Linguarum Europae*. For the first ALE volume I had chosen the question 'rainbow' (Alinei 1983, 1984ab, 1992). I knew that many names of the rainbow had a typical magico-religious character and I was curious to see what a European map would yield. When I classified all names of the rainbow with a magico-religious character I obtained a surprising result: there were basically three different types of magico-religious motivations: (1) a Christian or Muslim motivation, depending on the area; (2) a pre-Christian or pre-Muslim one, sharing an anthropomorphic representation; and (3) a more mysterious motivation, characterized by a zoomorphic representation, and for the moment without a precise collocation in the sequence. The first two of these categories, the Christian and the pre-Christian with an anthropomorphic representation, were similar to those we have already seen for Saturday and Sunday, and thus confirmed the existence of the same kind of archaeolinguistic stratigraphy. Here are some example: in Albanian: 'the Virgin's belt'; in Baltic: Latvian 'God's bow' and 'God's belt', and Lithuanian 'the agreement's belt'; in Celtic: Welsh 'covenant's bow'; in Greek: 'the nun's bow', 'the saint's halo'; in Iranic: Tat 'the prayers bridge' and 'Sirat bridge' (Islamic myth); in Romance: Catalan 'St Martin' s bow' and 'St John's bow'; Franco-provencal 'St Bernard's horn'; French (oïl or occitan) 'St Martin's'/ St Bernard's/ God's bow', 'God's circle', 'good Good's belt', 'good God's garter', 'the good Virgin's ribbon', 'St John's cross', 'St Bernard's wheel', 'Bernard's/ St Michael's bow', 'St Bernard's/ Barnaby's /Denis' /Martin's crown', St John's/ Sain 'Martin's bow', 'St Bernard's/ St Leonard's/ St Barnaby's crown', 'St Barnaby's /Martin or Medard's belt', 'St Martin's cercle', 'St Bernard's bridge', 'St Barnaby's wheel', 'St Martin's/Bernard's ruler' and 'good God's alliance'; Portuguese 'Noah's bow', 'God's bow', 'the Virgin's bow', 'St Mary's/ St Helen's/ St Mark's bow'; Italian

'the Virgins bow'; Reto-romance 'St Martin's bow'; Spanish 'the Lord's bow', 'God's band', 'St John's bow'; in Slavic, Croatian 'Mary's belt'; in Semitic: Maltese 'Allah's (archer's) bow', in Turkic: Tchuvash 'the prayers bridge' (Islamic).

Now an important question is in order: why should the rainbow be christianized or islamized? In the case of Saturday and Sunday, these were and are the days consecrated to God in the new religion, so the reason for their christianization is evident. But why the rainbow? To explain this, we must assume that the rainbow had been considered to some extent sacred by European folks, prior to their Christianisation or Islamisation, so that the change in religion would cause a wave of lexical innovations, aiming to express the same relationship in the new religious terms. This working hypothesis is confirmed by the very existence of the second category of representation, that of pre-Christian or pre-Muslim anthropomorphic motivations, which would be unexplainable if the rainbow had not been sacred before Christendom and Islam. Here are some examples: in the Uralic area, the rainbow is associated with pre-Christian gods such as *Ukko* (the Old Man), *Tiermes* and the Thunder god. In the Turkic area it is associated with the god *Tängri*. In the IE area, in Ossetic (Iranian) it is connected with the epic figure *Soslan*, in the Baltic area with the magico-religious female being *Laume*; in the Romance area it appears connected with the mythical 'old woman' (Alinei 1988), with *Iris*, with the *lutin* (a French 'elf', whose name derives from *Neptunus*). An almost pan-European motivation is then the 'belt', or 'band', or 'ribbon', often of a kind exclusively worn by women, and thus indicating the rainbow as the ornament of a female goddess. It appears in Albanian, Baltic, Celtic, Finnic, Greek, Gypsy languages, Lapp, Nakho-Dagestanian, Permic, Romance, Slavic, Turkic, Udmurt, Veps. Interestingly, at Indoeuropean level, lith. *júosta*, dial. bulg. *pojas*, *opas*, Serbo-Croatian dial. *pas, pasats* (from aslav. *pojasь* 'cintura'), ngr. *zóni, zonári*, all come from the same IE root *$*ius$-* 'to gird', proving the existence of a common Balto-Slavo-Greek, East-European myth, associated with the representation of the rainbow as the belt of a female mythical being.

I come now to the third group of motivations, based on a zoomorphic representation of the rainbow, which, as I said, is more mysterious and problematic. These names of the rainbow are for example based on 'fox' in Albanian, Lithuanian, German, Italian, and Belorussian dialects; 'cow, ox' or 'horn' in Basque, Komi Zyrian, French, and Slovenian dialects; 'divine animal' in Komi Permiak, Komi Zyrian, Catalan, Slovenian dialects; 'whale' (or 'dolphin') in Italian, 'weasel' in Caucasian (xva); 'skunk' in Kalmuk. Sometimes, as in Lithuania, the motivation is the part

of the body by which an animal drinks, like 'trunk', and almost everywhere in Europe we find the motivation 'drinker'; in Hungarian we also find 'pump' (a probable transformation of the drinking animal). The question is then: does this third group of motivation fit the other two, and if it does how? Is there a place in the archaeolinguistic stratigraphy for this category of motivations? The answer comes from two directions: folklore traditions and history of religion.

Folklore traditions in Europe and in the world provide clear evidence for the existence of a myth, by which the rainbow is conceived as a gigantic animal -most often a snake- which swallows the water from the earth and eventually spits it up again in the form of rain. This myth has been interpreted by specialists as reflecting the fundamental initiation rite by which boys are first swallowed by the totemic animal, and then vomited again as adult men. In Aboriginal Australia, for example, the rainbow-snake is one of the most well-known mythical beings, which shows precisely these characteristics. As to Europe, the idea that the rainbow drinks all the water survives not only in the oral tradition, but also in the motivation 'drinker' -one of the most frequent in Europe- as well as in the form of idiomatic expressions: in the Slavic area, for example, instead of saying that a person 'drinks like a sponge, or a fish', one says he 'drinks like the rainbow': Czech *pít jako duha*. More important for the chronology, the 'drinking rainbow' is already attested in Plautus' *Curculio* (third century b.C.).

History of religions provides two kinds of evidence. On the one hand specialists, on the basis of the ethnographic record and ancient religions, have come to the conclusion that animals were considered as ancestors and protectors, and played a central role in the magico-religious behaviour of traditional societies. It has also been suggested that such a cult of animals -called 'totemism'- would be the earliest form of religion, and as such universally known. On the other hand, historico-religious research has succesfullly argued that any anthropomorphic representations of supernatural powers must necessarily follow the emerging of élites endowed with limitless powers in real society. And since this phenomenon is typical of stratified societies of the Metal Ages -especially Bronze Age-, anthropomorphic representations of gods cannot be earlier than Bronze Age. For our problem, then, it would be possible to assume that the zoomorphic representation of natural phenomena is a relic of neolithic or even earlier magico-religious thinking, whereas the anthropomorphic one would reflect later, Bronze-Age developments, preceding the historical religions. Needless to say, this preliminary conclusion was based only on the results

obtained with the study of the motivations of the rainbow. A more solid body of evidence was required.

Two different directions were open to further test the hypothesis. If the rainbow had shown animal names as relics of a very early religion, then we should find evidence of this also in the onomasiology of animals. This is why my next two maps for the *Atlas Linguarum Europae* concerned animals: one the 'weasel' (Alinei 1986), and the other the 'lady-bird', which I made in co-authorship with Manuela Barros Ferreira (Barros Ferreira and Alinei 1990).

5. The stratigraphy modified: animal names

The two above-mentioned maps yielded precisely the results I had hoped to obtain. For not only did they show two of the same magico-religious motivations I had found for the rainbow, namely Christian/Muslim and pre-Christian/pre-Muslim anthropomorphic names, but also a third category, which seemed to match perfectly the interpretation I had given of the zoomorphic category for the rainbow. Let us see these three groups of motivations more in detail.

For the 'lady-bird', the Christian or Muslim motivation is by far the most diffused one. It appears everywhere in Europe, in hundreds of compound words in which the name of a Christian or Islamic religious being or notion is associated with another animal, which is its attribute: e.g. 'God's bird', 'God's cow', 'Christ's little hen'. The religious figure or notion can be 'God', or 'good God' or 'Lord', or 'our dear lord' 'our father' and the like, in the whole gamut of traditional addresses to God, as well as 'Christ', Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, St Mary, God's Mother, God's sister, a variety of saints (the most frequent being St Peter, St Paul, St Martin, St Nicolas, St Anthony, St Michael, St Barnaby, St Catherine, St Lucy, St Ann), 'little saint, 'angel', 'soul', 'devil, 'priest', 'monk', 'nun, 'pope's wife', 'pilgrim', 'heaven' 'paradise' 'church'; in the Muslim area 'Allah', 'Fatima', 'mosque'. A representative list of the most frequent combinations would occupy several pages. The pre-Christian, anthropomorphic level for the lady-bird is represented by several motivations: in the Finnic area, the god who is associated with the lady bird (as 'cow' or 'sheep') would be, of course, *Ukko*, the most powerful Finnic god. In Finnish the lady-bird can also be *Lemminkainen*, a folk-character of the Kalevala; in Frisian, it takes the appearance of the North-West Germanic elf *Puken* (cf. Engl. *Puck*); in Southern Italy it is the elf *Monachello*, while in Northern Italy it is a 'Nymph'; in Rumania it is associated with a famous mythological female being, *Paparuga*, usually in the centre of farming fertility rituals; in Italian,

Ukrainian and Rumanian it also appears as 'witch' or '(female) soothsayer'; in Greek it is associated with nothing less than the *Moira*.

As far as the 'weasel' is concerned, the ALE net does not show any Christian names, but they appear in dialect dictionaries, and their scarcity is certainly due to the fact that the weasel is considered very harmful by peasants. It has, however, quite a few magico-religious pre-Christian or pre-Muslim names, such as 'fairy' in English dialects, 'Diana' in Sardinia, 'witch' in France, 'domestic genius' in Russia, 'guardian spirit of the earth' in Karelia. Curious motivations such as Spanish, Occitan and Italian 'bread and cheese' and Occitan 'bread and milk' have been succesfully explained by Romance scholars as relics of pre-Christian rituals. Many other motivations of this type appear outside the ALE (e.g. German 'wild woman', a member of the magic *wilde Leute*).

As I said, the most interesting result of the research on the weasel and the lady-bug was the discovery of a third category of names, which seemed to match perfectly the third category of the rainbow names, namely 'kinship names'. Both the weasel and the lady-bird appear with kinship names in the whole of Europe, and the weasel, in particular, appears as a 'bride', or 'daughter-in-law', in the whole South-East of Europe. These names of relatives given to animals, like 'my uncle', 'my aunt', 'mother', 'grand-mother', 'daughter-in-law' and the like, are indeed typical folk-names of wild animals and insects, and several scholars had already interpreted them as relics of a 'totemistic' view of the universe, in which animals would be our ancestors and closest relatives.

It looks, then, as if the third layer of the rainbow stratigraphy corresponds to the totemic role of animals in the stratigraphy of animal names. The match could not be better, for if we assume animals as playing a central role in the magico-religious vision of the universe of traditional societies, then their social role must have indeed been that of totem.

6. Confirming and expanding the stratigraphy

There remained a last question, perhaps the most important one: if the names of the rainbow and of animals showed a threefold stratigraphy, connected with a sequence of different magico-religious representations of the world, should we not find the same motivations in the names of other kinds of realia?

To answer this question ALE maps would be of no use, but a different research method had to be found. As we know, onomasiology is the comparative study of the different names and the different motivations for the same notion in different languages and dialects. There is another

method of lexical investigation called *semasiological*, which can be defined as the comparative study of the realia that share the same name/motivation.

Consider, for example, the notion 'God'. Onomasiologically, one can study the names for 'God' in the different world languages, and make a comparative, onomasiological study of their motivations, hoping to throw light on the origin of the notion[2]. But one can also take the English word *God*, or German *Gott*, or French *Dieu*, or Slavic *Bog*, and consult all dialectal sources, to find all the **meanings** that these words have, either alone or in association with other words. This will give us an idea of what aspects of the universe have been associated with 'God' within that particular dialect or group of dialects. In the same way, if one takes the local name for the 'witch', or for 'devil', or for any magico-religious being existing in a given culture and in a given language or dialect, and lists all the meanings that this word has in dialect sources, he will have an idea of the different aspects of reality that have been associated with witches, with the devil or with any magico-religious being in that language. In more technical words, by following this line of research, one can determine (A) the referential, semantic scope of each magico-religious motivation; and (B) the structure of the universe associated with magico-religious representations. On such a basis, we can obtain a systematical tabulation of all realia the names of which share the same magico-religious motivation: first Christian motivations, such as 'God', 'Jesus', 'Mary', all the popular male and female saints, priests, monks and nuns, and other Christian institutions; then all realia the names of which share an anthropomorphic pre-Christian motivation, both of the literary, classic type, such as 'Venus', 'Neptune', 'Diana' etc., and of the oral-tradition type, such as 'witch', 'fairy', 'elf', 'ogre', 'bogeyman' and the like; then all the realia having a name with an animal motivation, and finally all realia with a kinship name. What we obtain has a considerable general value: a classified, structured list of all the realia that in the same area have a name with a magico-religious motivation.

Such a research, of course, cannot be done single-handedly for all European areas, let alone in the whole world. But even on a more limited basis the cumulative result obtained by onomasiological and semasiological research allows a twofold conclusion: (A) On the one hand **magico-religious motivations seem to be given to all basic aspects of reality**: animals (mostly insects and wild animals), plants, atmospheric and other natural phenomena, landscapes of a special kind, diseases and death, work

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[2] I hope to produce an ALE map on this notion.

products and instruments, family relatives. Besides, of course, magico-religious beings and institutions themselves. In other words, the referential scope of magico-religious motivations is practically universal. (B) On the other hand, within this universal scope, by far the highest frequency is that of the Christian/Muslim motivations, followed by the pre-Christian/Muslim anthropomorphic ones as second, by the zoomorphic and the kinship names as last. The simplest explanation for this frequency scale is the same given by archaeology, by which the most recent layer is always the most frequent and diffused, and the earliest the rarest.

I will now briefly illustrate the main referents designated by the three different classes of magico-religious motivations.

7. Animals

Besides the weasel and the the lady-bug, I can list the glow-worm (Barros Ferreira 1997), with names such as 'St John', 'St John's bonfire, St John's sparkle', 'St John's light', 'St John's little animal', Baptist 'fire', 'glowing angel', 'devil's fire', attested in Corsican, Czech, French, Danish, Estonian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Nakho-Dagestanian, Netherlandish, Norwegian, Polish, Rumenian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Spanish. The 'butterfly' (Contini 1997) appears christianized "dans l'Europe méditéranéenne", with names such as 'God's little dove', 'Lord's hen', 'little angel', 'little Easter', 'little saint', 'the *pope*'s wife', 'the sin's bird', but also in Finland, for example, as 'Brigit's bird', and in Komi-Zyrian as 'God's or Heaven's bird'. The 'grasshopper' (Avanesov, Ivanov, Donadze 1983) appears in Lithuania as 'little devil', in Rumania as 'horse/little horse of the priest', and in Russia as 'little divine horse'. Only for Italy, and again leaving out the lady-bird and the weasel, I have found Christian motivations for the dialect names of the praying mantis, the tree-frog, the blowfly, the butterfly, the dragon-fly, the dolphin, the seal, the swallow, the wolf, the rose-beetle, the snake, the snail, the caterpillar, several species of fish, the stag-beetle, the cockroach, the wag-tail, the black-cap and so on (Alinei 1984c).

Among pre-Christian representations of animals, leaving out weasel and lady-bird again, the butterfly appears in Netherlandish as 'the Sun's bird', in Austria as 'the forest's elf', in the Slavic area as a messenger of 'nightmare', 'fever' or 'scab' (Contini 1997). Several names of the grasshopper (Avanesov, Ivanov, Donadze 1983), such as Italian 'pregnant mother' and 'lady', and French 'demoiselle' and the like, clearly point to an earlier, no longer recognizable sacred female being. In Italy, leaving out again the lady-bird and the weasel, I have found the motivation 'fairy'

for the grass-hopper, the toad, the praying mantis, the snake, the 'witch' for the butterfly, the owl, the dragon-fly, the rain-worm, the cockroach, the caterpillar, the may-bug, the spider, the 'elf' for a water insect, the 'dragon' for the golden oriole, the 'pharaoh' for the dolphin, a 'Tartarus' for the turtle (Alinei 1984c).

The most archaic layer, represented by kinship names, is extremely frequent for animals everywhere in Europe, and indeed the world over. Without leaving the ALE, also the 'lady bird' and the 'butterfly' show quite a few such names. The lady bird as a relative appears in an even wider area: as a 'grandmother' (sometimes 'old woman) in Greek, Serbo-Croatian, Polish, Russian, Mordvinan, Komi Zyrian, Finnish, Udmurtian; as a 'mother' in Rumanian, Sardinian, Belorussian, Bashkirian, Tatar, Russian, Livian; as an 'aunt' in Italian, German; as an 'uncle' in Albanian, as a 'grandfather' in Komy Zyrian, Swedish, Maltese, Udmurtian, as 'godmother' in Komi Zyrian; as a 'bride and spouse' in Polish, Italian, Albanian, Macedonian, Turkish; as a 'sister-in-law' in Bulgarian, etc. The butterfly appears as 'grandmother' in the Eastern Slavic area, as 'mother' in German and Sardinian, as 'grandfather' and 'father' in the Uralic area. From other ALE maps: Lithuanian and French 'grandfather' for the grasshopper. In my own research (e.g. Alinei 1984c, 1993a, 1995) I have been able to collect an impressive list of kinship names given to animals the world over. I can cite: in Burma 'grandmother' for the monkey, and 'father' for pig, 'matrilinear kin' for the rat; in India 'maternal uncle' for the snake, in Amman 'grandfather' for the tiger, the elephant and other wild animals, in Africa 'grandfather' for the chamaleon (Herero's totem), 'ancestor' for a kind of bird (Henne's totem), and for the elephant (Fang's totem). In Madagascar, the largest of the lemurs, which is taboo and is considered everybody's ancestor, is called 'father'. In Mansi (Vogul), one of the Ob-ugric Uralic languages, the bear has names such as 'father', 'uncle', 'husband', 'father of the spouse's brother', 'grandfather', 'old man'; often, the kinship name is accompanied by a 'divine' attribute: e.g. the bear and she-bear can be called 'divine animal', 'god's daughter', 'heavens' daughter', 'son of (different local magico-religious beings)', or just 'idol', 'idol-animal' and the like (Alinei 1996a, 683-4). In the European Uralic area wild animals show the same characteristic: in Estonian the wolf is 'uncle of the forest', in Finnish 'grandfather', in Hungarian the bear is 'godfather' (Alinei 1996a, 684). In the Turkic area the bear shows names such as 'ancestor', 'uncle', 'father', in Mongolian 'brother' and 'cousin'. In Germany 'godfather/godmother' are the wolf and the fox, 'grandfather/grandmother' the toad, which can also be 'father' and 'aunt'. The hare is 'brother', the fox 'uncle'. In Sweden the bear is 'grandfather',

the seal 'brother'. In the Slavic area 'grandmother' is used for the stagbeetle, the bear, the butterfly, 'uncle' and 'grandfather' for the wolf and the bear. In the Baltic area 'grandfather' is the grasshopper, and 'son-in-law' the wolf. In Albania 'old woman' is the home-fed and cherished snake. In France 'godfather' and 'godmother' can be the golden oriole, the wolf, the fox, the magpie, 'cousin' the fox and the grasshopper, 'relative' the cuckoo, 'grandmother/grandfather' the wolf, the spider and the grasshopper. In Rheto-Romance 'mother' is the butterfly; in Northern Italy the owl and other Strigidae, as well as the fruit-worm are 'uncle John'. 'Uncle ' and 'aunt', often but not always followed by a proper name, can be, depending on the dialect, the pig, the goat, the fox, the golden oriole, the wren, the woodworm, the snake (until recently kept in the house as protector); 'ancestor/ancestress' the toad and several insects; 'godmother/godfather' the golden oriole. In Central Italy 'grandfather' is the name of several birds, 'mother' of the caterpillar, 'aunt/uncle ' of the mantis, the toad, the snail, the wren. In Southern Italy 'mother' is the caterpillar and the snail, 'aunt' or 'uncle' the wolf, the hare, the owl, the caterpillar, the butterfly, the toad, the finch and the robin, 'brother/cousin' the sparrow. In Sicily 'godmother' is the fox, 'aunt' a (mythical) snake and the butterfly. In Sardinia 'mother' is the caterpillar, the grasshopper, the mantis and the rainworm, 'godfather/godmother' the fox. For most of these animals, folk traditions in many European countries (for example god-fatherhood rituals, or religious-like processions carrying the dead animal) enlighten us further on the 'sacred' meaning hidden behind the name.

8. Plants and flowers

Plants and flowers show hundreds of magico-religious motivations of a Christian nature: I will not give a list of their names, which would take too long, but I will underline what seems to me the most interesting aspect of this class, namely that most plants with a magico-religious name are medicinal plants. The explanation is evident: owing to their curative properties, these plants were considered magic by our ancestors.

Only for Italy I can mention holly, Crataegus oxicanthia, Taraxacum officinalis, with the motivation 'Lord', poppy, Convallaria majalis, Colchicum autunnalis, Oxalis acetosella, Rubus fruticosus, Crataegus oxicanthia, Carlina acaulis, Oxalis acetosella, Cyclamen europaeus, Arum italicum, Hypericum perforatum, Artemisia Abrotanum, Stachis annua with *'Madonna'*, Leucanthemum vulgare with *'Corpus Domini'*, Salvia pratensis with 'St Albert', lily and Colchicum autumnale with 'St Antony', Verbascum thapsum, Hyoscyamus niger with 'St Apollonia', Cycla-

men europaeus with 'St Bernard', daisy, lily, wild rose, Taraxacum officinalis, Crataegus Oxycanthia with 'St Catherine', rhododendron, Verbascum thapsum, Hypericum perforatum, Verbascum Thapsus, Verbena officinalis, Lavandula Spica, Ribes rubrum with 'St John', Linaria vulgaris with 'St Joseph', Hyoscyamus niger, Lavandula Spica, Hypericum perforatum, Arum Dracunculus with 'St Mary', Crataegus oxyacantha, Colchicum autunnale, Salvia pratensis with 'St Martin', Verbena officinalis, Carlina acaulis, Hypericum perforatum with 'St Peter', Hypericum perforatum with 'St Roche', Sempervivum tectorum. with 'St Zeno, Leucanthemum vulgare with 'paradise', Datura stramonium with the 'Judgement trumpet', thistle, Sambucus ebulus, Verbascum thapsum, Taraxacum officinalis, Datura stramonium, Dipsacus sylvestris with the 'devil', Artemisia vulgaris, Taraxacum officinalis with 'friar', poppy, thistle, Taraxacum officinalis, Oxalia acetosella, Cyclamen europaeum with 'priest', poppy, Papaver Rhoeas, Bellis perennis, Taraxacum officinale, Convallaria majalis with 'munk' or 'nun', Verbena officinalis with 'sacred' and so on (Alinei 1984c).

The same medicinal plants that are found with Christian names also show the earlier pre-Christian anthropomrphic motivations. I can list only for Italy the motivation 'fairy' for Taraxacum officinale, Bryonia dioica, Leucanthemum vulgare; 'witch' for Rosa arvensis, Ilex Aquifolium, Artemisia Dracunculus, Carlina acaulis, Stachys arvensis, Pteris aquilina, Stachys annua, Antirrhinum majus, Linaria vulgaris, Mercurialis annua, Hyoscyamus niger, Dipsacus sylvestris; 'magician' and 'bewitching' for Datura Stramonium; 'ogre' for Verbascum thapsum; 'thunder' for rhododendron, Verbena officinalis, Hypericum perforatum, Sempervivum tectorum (some of these plants are believed to protect people and houses from lightnings if placed on the roof); 'Venus' for Dipsacus sylvestris; 'Jupiter' for Sempervivum tectorum (ibidem).

And again, the same medicinal plants appear associated to an animal. Though the association cannot always be attributed to magico-religious beliefs, it is worth listing, only for Italy: Verbascum thapsum, Oxalis Acetosella, Crataegus Oxyacantha with the motivation 'fox'; Antirrhinum majus, Crataegus Oxyacantha, Salvia pratensis, Dipsacus syloestris, Arum italicum, Arum Dracunculus, with 'wolf'; Bellis perennis, Spirea ulmaria with 'goat'; Crataegus Oxyacantha, Antirrhinum majus with 'bear'; Linaria vulgaris, Bryonia dioica, Arum Dracunculus, Arum italicum, Artemisia Dracunculus, with 'snake'; Bryonia dioica, Arum italicum, Papaver Rhoeas with 'toad'; Arum italicum, Taraxacum officinale, Hyoscyamus niger, Cyclamen europaeum with 'pig'; Oxalis Acetosella with 'cuckoo'; Ilex Aquifolium, Lycopodium clavatum with 'mouse'; Arum italicum, Hyoscyamus niger,

Leucanthemum vulgare, Antirrhinum majus, Colchicum autumnale with 'ox/cow/calf'; Antirrhinum majus, Crataegus Oxyacantha, Arum italicum, Verbascum Thapsus with 'donkey'; Hyoscyamus niger with 'horse'; Taraxacum officinale, Arum italicum, Linaria vulgaris, Colchicum autumnale, Antirrhinum majus, Bellis perennis with 'dog'; Lycopodium clavatum, Bellis perennis, Rosa arvenis with 'hen'; Arum italicum with 'cat'; Antirrhinum majus, Verbascum Thapsus, Linaria vulgaris, Convallaria majalis, Taraxacum officinale with 'lion'; Artemisia Dracunculus, Antirrhinum majus, Arum Dracunculus, Pterocarpus Draco, Dracaena Draco with 'dragon' (ibidem).

9. Natural phenomena

Among natural phenomena that have been "Christianized", I can cite, besides the rainbow, the 'St Helm fire' (Alinei 1993b); the 'rain with shower' and the 'milky way', both with a variety of Christian motivations; 'moon', which in Hungary shows the name 'God's cake' (Brozović 1983, 14), 'thunder', which in FU area appears with the (Russian) name 'Holy Elias' (Goeman and Hogerheijde 1988, 10). In the Romance area, 'Madonna' motivates dialect names of the milky way, the St Helm fire, the sea tornado and the rain with shower.

Pre-Christian, anthropomorphic gods appear in names of the 'thunder' (Goeman, Hogerheijde, 1988), for which we encounter representations already known to us: the Finno-Ugrian thundergod *Ukko*, the Lapp *Tiermes*, and new ones such the Slavic *Perun* and the Lithuanian *Perkunas*, the Germanic *Thorr*. In those for 'lightning', about the same: Germanic *Thor*, Lithuanian *Perkunas*, Karelian *Ukko*, and Kalmuk *Taengri*. Also names for 'cloud' (Itkonen 1983, 35) can be motivated by a mythical 'Old Man', as for example in Swedish, where it is associated with folk mythologies. Names of 'hail' refer to an anthropomorphic figure: a mythical 'Old Woman, grandmother' in Mordvinian (Saramago and Vitorino 1983, 87) and 'white-bearded man' in Karachay-Balkar (idem, 81). Further, in the Romance area appear motivations such as 'witch' for the spark, will-o'-the-wisp, rain with shower, fog, whirlwind, the trembling of hot air, 'elf' for whirlwind, spots on the moon, will-o'-the-wisp, and sleet.

An animal representation of natural phenomena is among the most frequent ones: besides the rainbow, both 'thunder' and 'thunderbolt' appear as 'serpent/dragon' (Goeman-Hogerheijde 1988 12, 20), and the lightning also as a 'dolphin', besides 'whale' (idem 34). In Italy I have found the 'fox' for the rain with sunshine, the 'cow' for clouds, the 'goat'

for the trembling of hot air and fort the St Helm fire, the 'she-wolf' for
rough see and fog, a 'mythical snake' for tornado, the 'dragon' for the
landslide, for marshes, for sources and for torrents, the 'pig/sow' for rain-
bow and rain with sunshine, the 'hen' for the milky way, the 'cat' for rain
with sunshine. Moreover, for natural phenomena we also find an explicit
'totemic' relationship: in the Nenets area, where the moon is called
'grandfather' (Brozović 1983), in the FU area, where 'thunder' is called
'father' and 'grandfather' (Goeman and Hogerheijde 10, 19, 52), and in
southern Italy, where the rainbow is greeted with the word 'godfather'
(Alinei 1981).

10. Diseases

Among diseases, typical are the Christian motivations for 'epilepsy',
'St Vitus' dance', and 'St Anthony's fire' (herpes). Their association also
with pre-Christian and even with animal names (see further) proves that
the original role of the saints in the representation was not that of protec-
tor against the illness, but that of performer and thus of the cause. A good
example of the process involved is shown by so called *tarantism*, a typical
form of dance-induced trance of Southern Italy. First this trance was at-
tributed to the bite of the tarantula (whence its name), and considered as a
sort of shaman-like performance, and thus typical of especially gifted per-
sons; then it was attributed to a saint (usually St Paul), as in St Vitus'
dance and the like, who eventually was seen as the protector from the dis-
ease. In the area where tarantism has been better studied, namely in
South-eastern Italy, the two conceptions coexisted until recently. As to the
anthropomorphic layer, I have found in Italy 'fairy' 'elf' 'ogre' for the
nightmare, 'witch' for 'herpes', 'werewolf' for epilepsy. In this last exam-
ple, the original function of the magic performer appears most evident.
Quite a few pathologies have animal names: 'fox' and 'she-wolf' for a
plant disease, 'goat' for nightmare, 'horse', 'sheep', 'snake', 'cock',
'cow', 'pig', for a kind of skin burning, 'pig' for wart (lat. *verruca* from
verris), 'caterpillar' for herpes, 'sow' and 'frog' for scrofula (the very lat.
name *scrofula* shows such a motivation), 'worm' for smallpox, measles,
finger worm, the above-mentioned 'tarantula' for epilepsy and the like,
'owl' for jaundice, 'toad' for a bovine disease, and 'frog' for ranula in hu-
mans (the lat. name *ranula* comes from *rana* 'frog') (Alinei 1984c).

11. Family and tribal relations

Among family relations, Christian names for the 'godfather/god-
mother/godchild' show the Christianisation of one of the most archaic

family ties the initatic one- usually (and wrongly) considered of Christian origin. Pre-Christian, and anthropomorphic appears to be the Greek word *theîos* for 'uncle' (from which it. *zio, zia* 'uncle, aunt' derive), the divine origin of which was noted by Lévi-Strauss. A zoomorphic representation of family relations appears very rarely: the only example I have found is that of the godmother, which can be called 'fox' in some Italian dialect. The totemic character of tribal relations, on the contrary, appears most frequently, as shown by many ancient names of European peoples and tribes, or special groups, such as the Italic *Hirpi, Hirpini* (from an Italic name of the 'wolf') and *Piceni, Picentes* (from the Latin name of the 'pie'), the Latin *Luperci* (and their rituals *Lupercalia*), priests devoted to the cult of the wolf, the Greek *Arkades* and *Myrmidones* (from the name of the 'bear' and the 'ant'), the Germanic *Eburones* (from *Eber* 'wild pig), the Iranian *Saka* (from the name of the 'stag'), and so on (Alinei 1984c).

12. Magico-religious beings

Interestingly, even clearly non-Christian magico-religious beings have been re-named with a Christian name, as shown by the Italian *monachello* 'elf' (from 'monk'), the *befana* 'witch' (from Epiphany'), *S.Nicolas* for a fish-like magico-religious being. Many magico-religious beings, besides a zoomorphic appearance, have an animal name: the *dragon*, from the Greek word for 'snake', the French *vouivre*, from the Latin word for 'viper', the English *werewolf*, with parallels and illustrious predecessors in many European areas, the German *Lindwurm*, from 'worm', the Slavic *smok* 'snake, dragon', the Serbo-Croatian *aždaja* 'dragon', the Sardinian monster *Muska Makedda*, from *muska* 'fly', the it. word *strega* 'witch', which comes from lat. *strix* 'owl', and many others. Several mythical beings of the oral tradition have kinship names: in France *ma mère l'oie* 'mother goose' (the French name comes from **avica*, dim. of *avis*, which following my etymology could also be read as a dim. of *avia* 'ancestress'), in Sicily *mammadraga* 'mother-snake' 'mother dragon', in Sardinia *babborco* 'father ogre', and *comare orca* 'godmother ogress'. Propp and other scholars have placed such mythical figures of fairy tales against a background of totemic relationships (Alinei 1984c).

13. The over-all interpretative framework

Let us summarize our observations and come to a conclusion. First of all we can state that many aspects of our conclusion are confirmed by the historical record. The transition from animals gods to anthropomor-

phic gods, for example, is confirmed by the frequent association of anthro-
pomorphic gods with animals documented in history: e.g. Athena's owl,
Zeus' eagle, Apollo's dolphin and Apollo's wolf, in pre-Christian times;
St. Anthony's pig, the Lamb of God, the Holy Spirit as a dove in Christian
times. The same sequence is shown in the conception of natural phenom-
ena. These appear first 'governed' or controlled by gigantic animals in the
earliest cosmogonies; then they are controlled by anthropomorphic gods,
first pre-Christian and then Christian. Storms and floods, for example, af-
ter being identified with mythical animals (as is shown by so many world
myths), are eventually 'sent' to mankind by local gods (Ukko, Thor,
Perkunas, Jovis *tonans*, and the like), by *tempestariae*, i.e. witches spe-
cialised in *tempestae*), and lastly by God himself.

To conclude, the picture that comes out of magico-religious motiva-
tional research in European dialects reveals a vast and basically similar
process of cultural development, with differentiated realisations of the
same structural pattern. It can be assumed that European folks have gone
through a common development from an animal and nature-centered
magico-religious experience, to an anthropomorphic representation of the
same universe, to a Christian or Muslim re-interpretation of the same real-
ity. All in all, hundreds of dialect names in Europe testify to a Christiani-
zation and Islamization of such classes of realia. Of course, Muslim names
are much less frequent than the Christian, owing to the difference in the
areal scope of the two religions in Europe, but the process underlying the
lexical innovation has followed exactly the same path, and satisfied the
same need. Though the differences in the development can be as great as
those between a dolphin and a bear, between the finnish Ukko and the
latin Jupiter, and between Christendom and Islam, the processual and psy-
chological similarities are nevertheless striking.

Finally, the continuous evolutionary sequence shown by this pan-Eu-
ropean linguistic record represents one of the many arguments that can be
used against the traditional IE invasionist theory, and in favour of continu-
ity of all European populations from Paleolithic and Mesolithic times
(Alinei 1996a, 2000).

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