

**Problems of chronological and social stratification in the historical anthroponomastics**

The case of “lupine” and “equine” proper names  
among the Indo-European peoples

1. A. Loma, Das serbische Personennamensystem, in: *Die europäischen Personennamensysteme*, Hamburg, p. 679a:\*

Auch die Namen anderer Tiere kommen als PN vor ... Jedoch stellt *vuk*, aserb. *vlk* einen Sonderfall dar, denn es der einzige Tiername ist, der seit der ältesten Zeit einen Bestandteil der zusammengesetzten Personennamen bildet: Aserb. *Vlkoslav*, *Vlgdrag*, *Dobrovuk*, nserb. *Vukosav*, *Vukdrag*, *Stanivuk* [usw.; innerhalb der slavischen Welt sind solche Namen für die Serben charakteristisch; man wollte in ihnen eine Spur des Totemismus sehen, eher aber wurzeln sie in einer vorfeudalen Kriegerideologie (Wolfsschar als Inbegriff des Männerbundes), ähnlich wie die germ. PN mit *Wolf* in Beziehung mit dem Wodanskult gebracht werden]. ... Eine soziale Schichtung des Namenschatzes bestand und besteht heutzutage in verschiedenen Kulturen; z.B. waren im klassischen Griechenland die mit *hippos* zusammengesetzten PN ein Zeichen des höheren, Ritterstandes. [In slavischer Personennamengebung fehlt ‘Pferd’ völlig, nur bei den Serben kommen wenige PN mit *jezditi* ‘reiten’ vor: *Ježdimir*, *Prijezda*, die bei den anderen Slaven kein Gegenstück finden].

\* The paled text in square brackets has been omitted in the printed version.

2. Wolf and horse both are gregarious mammals, thus predestined for domestication. The wolf became the dog ca. 15000 years ago, the horse was domesticated some ten millenia later.

3. Among the Indo-Europeans, the horse was the most precious sacrificial animal, closely associated with the Sun god. The Hittite legislation prescribed punishments for all kinds of sodomy except that with a horse. According to Old Indian and Celtic traditions, such a one might have constituted a part of the Proto-Indo-European enthronement rite. — Cf.: J. Puhvel, Aspect of equine functionality, in: *Myth and Law among the Indo-Europeans*, Los Angeles 1970, 159–192.

4. PIE \**ék̑uos* ‘horse’ > Av. *aspa-*, Opers *asa-*, Lat *equus*, Gk *hippos*, Oir *ech*, OE *eoh*, OLith *ešva* ‘mare’, etc., a word used in the oral poetry and an element of PN, e.g. Vedic *Svašva-*, Avestan *Hwaspa-* ‘owning good horses’, Greek *Leúkippos* ‘owning white horses’, *Zeúxippos* ‘harnessing horses’, *Hippódamos* ‘tamer of horses’, Celtic *Epomeduos* ‘master of horses’. Unlike the names with \**g<sup>h</sup>ou-* ‘cow’, they express not only the wealth but also the nobility. — Cf.: Rüdiger Schmitt, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1967, 238–244; G.-J. Pinault, Gaulois *Epomeduos* ‘le maître des chevaux’, in: *Gaulois et celtique oriental*, Genève 2007, 291–308.

5. In Classical Athens the names with *hippos* were emblematic of the *hippês* ‘knights’, e.g. *Hippónikos* ‘winning by his horses’. It has been mockingly distorted by Aristophanes into *Hippóbinos* ‘Horse-Fuck’. With the end of Greek city-state their original motivation faded so that since the Hellenistic period a *Phillipos* was thus named not for his fondness of horses, nor to stress his equestrian rank, but after some famous bearer of this name in the past, be it the Macedonian king, father of Alexander the Great, or later, among Christians, one of the twelve apostles. Similarly, among the Zoroastrians the name *Jamasp* is traditionally given to refer to one of the first followers of Zarathushtra’s teaching, without any equine connotation (by the way, in its Avestan prototype *Jāmāspa-* only the second element *aspa-* ‘horse’ is etymologically clear).

6. PIE \**u̯lk̑os* ‘wolf’ > OInd *vṛk̑ah*, Av *vəhrko*, Lith *vilkas*, Sl \**vьlkъ*, etc.; a variant \**lúk̑os* in Gk *lýkos*, Lat *lupus*. Some parallels between the Slavic and Germanic compound names with this word: *Vl̑ko-mirь* : *Wolf-fried* both ‘wolf + peace’, *Vl̑ko-slavь* ‘wolf’ + ‘fame’: *Rud-olph* ‘fame’ + ‘wolf’, *Milo-vuk* : *Leub-olf* both ‘dear’ + ‘wolf’. Also the underived zoonym used as PN: Germ \**Wulfaz*, Sl \**Vьlkъ* < PIE \**U̯lk̑os*? — Cf.: Adolf Bach, *Die deutschen Personennamen*, Berlin 1943, 192; E. Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, Bonn 31900, 1640–1662.

7. In the Neolithic, the domestication of some animal species engendered the opposition ‘tame = human’ vs. ‘wild = divine’, cf. Hittite *siunas hūitar* ‘wild animals’, literally ‘animals of gods’; Latvian *dieva vērši* ‘God’s bulls’ (of the aurochs), *dieva zuosis* ‘God’s geese’ of the wild geese, *dieva suns* ‘God’s dog’ of the wolf. In Slavic, the same role is played by \**divьjь* ‘wild’, e.g. \**divьji gōsi* ‘wild geese’, which is etymologically an adjective possessive of the same Indo-European \**dei̯uos* ‘heavenly god’ > Latvian *dievs*. — Cf.: T. V. Gamkrelidze, Vjač. Vs. Ivanov, *Indoeuropejskij jazyk i indoeuropejcy*, Tbilisi 1984, 488.

8. Domestic animals served to sacrifice, thus the use of \**ék̑uos* as a PN would be ominous, and the compounds with it are exocentric, e.g. OInd *Svašva*, Gk *Kállippos* ‘owner of good horses’, unlike those with \**u̯lk̑os*, that are endocentric, e.g. Germ *Adolf* ‘a noble wolf’ besides *Wolf*, Serb *Dobrovuk* ‘a good wolf’ besides *Vuk* ‘Wolf’, not an \*‘owner of noble / good wolves’.

9. *A lupus in fabula*: Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864), cf. his *Srpski rječnik* (The Serbian Dictionary), Vienna 1818, s.v. *Vûk*:

A woman whose children don't survive gives to a newborn son the name *Vuk*, so that witches cannot eat him; for that reason I was given such a name.

10. Different ways of interpreting the lupine names: as totemistic, apotropaic, theophoric. Among the Germanic peoples, they were connected with Odin/Woden, and supposedly among the heathen Serbs with an Odinic figure too. The self-identification of the Serbs with the wolves is found in a medieval text. — Cf.: Veselin Čajkanović, *O srpskom vrhovnom bogu*, Belgrade 1941.

11. “Complexity of wolfishness” in the early Indo-European cultures. The developed social life of the wolves admired and imitated by the primitive humans. The real meaning of *Homo homini lupus* in Plautus, *Asinaria* 494: “Man is no man, but a wolf, to a stranger”, cf. Thomas Hobbes, in the dedication of his book *De Cive* (1642): “To speak impartially, both sayings are very true; That Man to Man is a kind of God; and that Man to Man is an arrant Wolfe. The first is true, if we compare Citizens amongst themselves; and the second, if we compare Cities.”

12. The ambivalence of the wolf among the early Indo-Europeans, depending on whether it was perceived as an individual (“lonely wolf”) or a member of a collective (wolf pack). Cf. Vedic *vṛka-* ‘wolf’ → ‘robber’, Avestan *vahrko bizangro* id. (literally: ‘two-footed wolf’), the formula ‘to make himself / to be a wolf’ in the archaic legislative texts (Old Indian Manusmriti, Icelandic customary law, also Plato, Republic 565 *lýkōi genésthai*) used of an outlaw, outcast, murderer, cannibal, and, on the other hand, the wish the Hittite king Hattusili I (16<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) expresses by addressing the assembly (*pankus*), his soldiers might be unanimous as the wolves. Old Norse *vargr* ‘wolf; robber, evil-doer’ probably a loan from Iranian *varka-* in the same meanings, together with Slavic *\*vorgъ* ‘enemy, devil’, Old Prussian *wargs* ‘bad, evil’, by the way of a Middle Iranian (Sarmatian) form as reflected in Mordvinic *vargas* ‘wolf’. — Cf.: Vjač. Vs. Ivanov, Rekonstrukcija indoevropskih slov i tekstov, otažajuščih kul't volka, *Izvestija AN SSSR, Serija literatury i jazyka* 34/5, 1975, 399–408.

13. The “wolfish” rituals of the Indo-European warriors (the Hittite dancing of ‘men-wolves’ (Sumerogram: LU<sup>mes</sup> UR.BAR.RA), the ritual dance that the Gothic soldiers in the Byzantine army used to perform at Christmas, dressed in the wolf skins; Old Norse *úlfhédnar* ‘wolf-coats’, Odin’s special warriors who fought mad as hounds or wolves, without mailcoats, wearing the pelt of a wolf). — Cf.: Ivanov op.cit. and, of the Germanic PN with ‘wolf’, the old and sinfull compound *Hariulf* with *\*harja-* ‘army’ (*Hariulfus*, the name of a Burgundian prince attested as early as second half of 4th century A.D. in a Latin inscription from Trier), inverted *Wolfhari*, with a parallel in Serbian *Vukovoje* (*\*vojb* ‘warrior’). Old English *hildewulfas* ‘battle-wolves’, *heoruwulfas* ‘sword-wolves’ is used to describe armies in the Old Testament.

14. The folklore concept of *werewolves* ‘men-wolves’ among the Germanic peoples, the Slavs (*\*vǔlkodlaci* ‘wolf-haired ones’) and the Balts (Lith *vilkūkai* ‘running as wolves’) probably reminiscent of the wolfishly behaving and acting bands of warriors (*Männerbünde*). The first mention in Herodotus IV 105 refers to the Neuri, generally identified as the Proto-Slavs, or the Proto-Balts, or the Balto-Slavs:

It may be that these people are wizards; for the Scythians, and the Greeks settled in Scythia, say that once a year every one of the Neuri becomes a wolf for a few days and changes back again to his former shape. Those who tell this tale do not convince me; but they tell it nonetheless, and swear to its truth.

15. The wolfish behaviour of the worshippers of *Pripegala*, the chief god of the tribe of *Wilzi* ‘Wolves’, as described in a letter written in 1108 by Adelgot, the archbishop of Magdeburg:

Having decapitated the Christians before the altars of his (Pripegala’s) sacrilege, they hold jugs filled by human blood and howl in horrendous voices (horrendis uocibus ululantes), saying: “We celebrate a day of joy: Christ is defeated, Pripegala the most victorious one won!”

*Pripegala* presumably for Old Polabian *\*Pribygatva* ‘headhunter’. — Cf.: A. Loma, *Prakosovo*, Belgrade 2002, 89, 197–199 (in Serbian, with an English summary).

16. Tacitus, *Germania* 43, about the ghostly army of the Germanic *Harii*:

As for the *Harii*, quite apart from their strength, which exceeds that of the other tribes I have just listed, they pander to their innate savagery by skill and timing: with black shields and painted bodies, they choose dark nights to fight, and by means of terror and shadow of a ghostly army they cause panic, since no enemy can bear a sight so unexpected and hellish; in every battle the eyes are the first to be conquered.

The name *Harii* (*harja-* ‘army’) is akin to that of the *Einherjar*, Odin’s army in Valhalla, which is a mythological concept that underlies the folklore motif of the “Wild Hunt”, so that he was not only a war god, but also the ruler of (a

part of the) dead, and on earth a kind of the “Shepherd of wolves”, i.e. of the wolf warriors devoted to him. Already at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. Odin/Woden was the chief god of all Germanic peoples according to Tacitus, who refers to him under the Latinized name Mercury (*deorum maxime Mercurium colunt*; in return, Latin *dies Mercurii*, wherefrom French *mercredi*, was translated into Germanic as ‘Woden’s day’, thence *wednesday*).

**17.** Tacitus, Germania 46 about the *Venethi* (the Germanic name for the Slavs, cf. English *Wends*, German *Wenden*):

the Venedians have derived very many of their (Sarmatian) customs and a great resemblance. For they are continually traversing and infesting with robberies all the forests and mountains lying between the Peucinians and Fennians. Yet they are rather reckoned amongst the Germans, for that they have fixed houses, and carry shields, and prefer travelling on foot, and excel in swiftness. Usages these, all widely differing from those of the Sarmatians, who live on horseback and dwell in waggons.

The swiftness is an attribute not only of the horse, but also of the wolf, cf. Lithuanian *vilktašas* ‘werewolf’ is a compound of *vilkas* ‘wolf’ and *tekėti* ‘to run’ (§ 14), semantically close to the archaic Serbian name *Vukobrz* ‘swift as a wolf’. The 11<sup>th</sup> century Russian ruler Vseslav of Polotsk is depicted in the epic tradition as a wizard (*veščij, volh*) and a kind of werewolf, who, according to the 12<sup>th</sup>-century epic “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign”, assuming a wolf shape run over huge distances. In Serbian oral epics the adverb *vučki* ‘in a wolfish way’ is used to describe fast movement of the so called *haiduks*, originally a type of peasant irregular infantry in Hungary, whose name on the Ottoman ruled Balkans designated an amalgam of brigands and guerilla freedom fighters.

**18.** Two different forms of warfare seem to have been originally distributed according to age, as it was in the ancient Greece, where the wolfish way was reserved for the adolescent groups passing the warrior initiation (*Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture* 647):

The sign of the wolf (or the wolf-pack) is clear enough in Greek age set confraternities such as the Athenian *ἐφηβεία* and the Spartan *κροπτεία*: the adolescents in these peer-groups prepared for full warriorhood by behaviour that was exactly reversed from the norm: they prowled at night, were hidden and covert in their actions, used trick, trap, stratagem and ambush and all the techniques forbidden to the true adult warrior-hoplite, in his daylight discipline.

Cf. P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir et l’origine de l’éphébie athénienne*, *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 23/5, 1968, 947–964, as well as the etymology of the English word *infantry* as opposed to *cavalry* (from Latin *caballus* ‘horse’), going back to Latin *infans* ‘a little child’, via Spanish *infante* meaning both ‘child’ and ‘infantryman’.

**19.** In Greek, both names with *hippos* and those with *lykos* occur, starting from Homer. The former express possession (e.g. *Eúippos* ‘owner of good horses’, *Hippokóōn* ‘who looks after horses’), the latter are both exocentric (*Lykóphrōn*, *Lykomédēs* and most probably *Lýkourgos* all ‘wolf-minded’, cf. Homeric *lýssa* ‘martial rage’ ← ‘rabies’, *kýōn lyssētēr* ‘a rabid dog’, a derogatory description of a bravely fighting enemy) and endocentric (*Arēilykos* ‘who becomes a wolf through Ares’, i.e. the god personifying the violent, untamed aspect of war, *Autólykos* ‘the wolf itself’).

**20.** *Autólykos* a *nom parlant*, designating a maternal parent in charge of his grandson initiation, conformably to the rules of avunculate? Autolykus was the father of Anticlea, mother of Odysseus, who as an adolescent paid a visit to him and went hunting with his sons; he killed a boar, but only after the beast inflicted on him a wound, which left on his leg a scar that marked him for life (Od. XIX 386 sq.). Boar hunting was in many cultures a test of bravery, and for Odysseus it was his first hunt which obviously meant his initiation into maturity.

**21.** The “Doloneia”, the X book of the Iliad, seems to be based on a Bronze age initiatic scenario. Dolon was a Trojan warrior killed by Odysseus and Diomedes as he running by night and wearing a wolf skin tried to spy on the Greek ships. Considered a fast runner, he volunteered for this dangerous mission in the hope of getting the horses and bronze chariot of Achilles that Hector promised him as his prize at the end of the war. In Greek, *dólōn* as a common noun derived from *dólos* ‘ruse, trick’, which designates a secret weapon (poignard or stiletto) as it was used by the ephebes. Perhaps *Dólōn* was a name given to a young boy during his initiation, and the same might have been the case of the Achilles’ traditional epithet *podókēs* ‘swift-footed’, apparently a designation of a wolf warrior (Achilles, although the greatest hero under Troy who fought on his chariot with a team of two immortal horses, was in a way still immature and died unmarried).

**22.** The initiation was usually crowned by marriage. One of the favorite subjects in Serbian epics is the “Obstructed Marriage”, consisting of the fulfillment of several tasks by the bridegroom, some of them matching elements of the wedding ceremonies held among the Serbs, such as testing the bridegroom’s courage by a rival wearing a “formidable dress”, composed mostly of wolf and bear skins and heads. Among the Serbs, the word *vuk* ‘wolf’ plays a role in the wedding rituals, in which the bridegroom is called ‘wolf’ or ‘mountain wolf’ and his peers ‘wolves’; on the wedding night, the latter used to assemble around the house of the newly married couple and howl like wolves or make obscene jokes (which possibly hints that once upon a time all the members of the group of adolescents passing together through the initiation laid claim on the bride of each of them).— Cf.: A. Loma, *Prakosovo*, Belgrade 2002, 91–96 (English summary 330).

23. The wolfish aspect of Serbian matrimonial rites probably connected with the marriage by rape, surviving in Serbia into the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rather than a crime, this was an archaic custom deeply rooted in the Common Slavic and Indo-European past. It is reported on the heathen Slavic tribes by the Old Russian Primary chronicle; as a rule, the girl preliminary consented to be abducted. In the Old Indian Manu's law the formula *vīko hí śáh* 'he is a wolf' is applied to the bridegroom in the type of marriage called Rākṣasa, when he with his friends abducts the bride after having overcome by force her father or relations.

24. The wolfish names in Serbian epics designate a young warrior undergoing the initiation. In a poem, the youngest nephew is predestinated to suffer torture instead of his uncle by his name *Vukosav*, a compound of *vuk* 'wolf' and *slava* 'glory', which is contrasted by the names of his two elder brothers, *Milovan* ('the beloved one') and *Radovan* ('the pleasing one'). Another poem is about an adolescent named *Vuk* who comes to learn "bravery" from his uncle (his mother's brother, a further instance of the avunculate) and eventually kills his first enemy, "the Black Arab", in a wolfish way, by biting through his throat. The young hero is identified with a historical figure, Vuk Grgurević, nicknamed *Zmaj ognjeni* 'the Fiery Dragon', who in the second half of the 15th century was the titular despot of Serbia and commander of the Hungarian mercenary Black army, but his epic legend is, as in the case of the Russian Vseslav of Polotsk, largely unhistorical; moreover, a comparison between these two epic figures, carried out by Roman Jakobson and Gojko Ružičić, led to the conclusion that they both go back to a lycanthropic hero inherited from the Common Slavic epics. — Cf.: R. Jakobson / G. Ružičić, *The Serbian Zmaj Ognjeni Vuk and the Russian Vseslav Epos*, Bruxelles 1950.

25. The dithematic PN with *\*vьlkъ*, as well as the oral epics and the "wolfish" matrimonial customs are all characteristic of the western, "Dinaric" Serbs; rather than an innovation they are to be considered as a survival from a remote past.

26. Ritual and mythological concepts connected with wolves — a common Late Paleolithic heritage among the peoples of the Northern Hemisphere, shared by the North American Indians. E.g., Navajo have the same word *mai-coh* for 'wolf' and 'witch', according to the belief that a person could transform if donned a wolf skin, cf. IE derivatives from the root *\*ueid-* 'to possess (a supernatural) knowledge, clairvoyance' designating the wolf in Hittite (*uetna*), Old Norse (*witnir*) and a 'werewolf' in Slavic (Serb *vjedo-gonja*, Slov. *vedanec*, Ukr *viščun*). Sioux called the wolf *shunk manita tanka* 'a doglike powerful spirit', cf. Latv *dieva suns* (above § 7). The Crow dressed in wolf skins to hunt and the Pawnee were known as the "Wolf People".

27. Lucullus Virgil McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story*, Caldwell, Idaho, 1940:

(p. 20:) The multiplicity of names borne by certain warriors proved most confusing ... Practically every warrior was known by two names, and many by a half dozen—although some of them were "pet" or "fun" nicknames ... (p. 25:) "My name as a boy can not be translated. Too deep! You can not write it down ..." (p. 26:) "The whites call me Yellow Wolf, but I take that as a nickname. My true name is different, and is after the Spirit which gave me promise of its power as a warrior. I am Heinmot Hihhih, which means White Thunder..." (p. 27:) "I was a boy of about thirteen snows when my parents sent me away into the hills. It was to find my *Wyakin* ... a Spirit of a wolf ... appeared to me. Yellow-like in color, it sort of floated in the air. Like a human being it talked to me, and gave me its power ..." (p. 28:) "That was how i got named Yellow Wolf. Named for that wision-wolf appearing to me ... The name of thunder is to kill as it strikes and rolls along. My *kopluts* [war club] I made when a boy, by directions of the Spirit thag gave me promise of warrior power. It has the same killing strength as thunder." (p. 296:) "The Wolf-Power I was given made me a great hunter, a sure scout."

The concept of the 'guardian spirit', which is here called *wyakin*, is common to the Northern American tribes and may be compared with the Old Norse *fylgja*.

28. Lakota *Thašúŋke Witkó* 'Crazy Horse' or 'His-Horse-Is-Crazy'? The same dilemma in the cases of Comanchi *Tu-ukumah* 'Black Horse', Kiowa *Tsen-tainte*, Omaha *Shon-ga-ska* 'White Horse' — or rather 'owning white horse(s)', cf. OInd *Śvetāśva-*, Gk *Leúkippos* (above § 4). But 'Many Horses', as the names of a Lakota holy man and a Blackfoot leader are translated, is undoubtedly a *bahuvrihi* compound, such as Avestan *Pouru.aspa-* 'owning many horses'.

29. The polyonymy in the tribal societies was primarily connected with the ritual initiations into the successive age grades that might include name change. It seems that among the early Indo-Europeans the peer groups of male initiates into adulthood used to imitate a wolf pack and that their members were given a temporary new name with a "lupine" connotation, which some of them may have retained lifelong, while others either reassumed their birth names or preferred to be renamed a second time with a more chivalrous, "equine" name emphasizing their newly achieved status as adults who went to war in the daylight, by chariot or on horseback.

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