

Re: proof that most etymologies are only fairy-tales

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On Aug 2, 7:28 pm, analys...@xxxxxxxxxxx wrote:

From our own Chris Culver's review of Don Ringe's book:

start quote:

Ringe has maintained correspondence with today's other eminent Indo-Europeanists, and his book includes a number of ideas which, though hitherto unavailable in print, have been floating around in e-mails for some time. Also, though Ringe generally sticks to the consensus view in his reconstructions, he occasionally expresses his own opinions on matters, and these are often thought-provoking. For example, for the ancestor of English "bear (animal)", Ringe would posit PIE *gwer "wild animal" (cf. Gr. ther, Latin ferus) instead of the usual conjecture that it is from a tabooistic circumlocution meaning "the brown one".

end quote.

there are any number of fanciful etymologies for "bear", "wolf" etc. ("the brown one", "the tearer", "honey eater" etc.)

So one must bear in mind that erroneous etymologies are another source of noise in reconstructions and I was surprised to find that even something so written about as "bear" is subject to scholarly disagreement.

I derive bear German Bär from Magdalenian BIR ancient Greek byros English fur: a bear was the furry one, the animal growing a precious fur that was used for giving warm in the harsh Ice Age winters. The actual word for bear was ARC wherefrom Latin ursus. ARC TYR --- cave bear (arc) he who overcomes (tyr), an Ice Age hero who took it up with a cave bear, a monster bigger than a grizzly. ARC TYR survives in king Arthur who fought a dragon for three days and

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nights and finally won. The myth of dragons originated from skulls and other bones of the long extinct cave bear *Ursus spelaeus* found in caves. Being able to cope with a cave bear was really something. Every young man can buy a ring for his girl friend, but imagine hunting a cave bear with the weapons of CroMagnons in order to present your lovely with a warm fur and a bear tooth on a sinew for an amulett ...

Magdalenian words are embedded in permutation groups that provide more information. The one of BIR is concerned with fertility and offspring. If you consult my Magdalenian dictionary you'll find that BIR means the fur wherein a newborn was laid in order to keep it warm, and this may preferably have been a bear fur. The feelings toward bears were ambivalent, they were feared, of course, but also admired, bear mothers for their courage in defending their cubs, and so, in Celtic times, the female bear was worshipped as a mother goddess. English to bear and birth and German gebären Geburt may be seen in this context, while evidence that bears were actually named for their precious fur comes from the old German word petz 'bear' petze 'female bear', surviving as Meister Petz in fables and fairy tales. A petz can also bristle up, stand on end (Grimm, Wörterbuch, quote from Hagedorn), so petz must be akin to German Pelz English pelt, both from Latin pellis that is also present in German Fell 'fur'.

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