

## Re: Bear, a Magdalenian test case

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- *From:* Franz Gnaedinger <frgn@xxxxxxxxxxx>
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On Aug 19, 11:17 am, Franz Gnaedinger <f...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Bear, a Magdalenian test case (1 of 3)

English bear German Bär Dutch beer is explained via two alternative PIE etymologies, namely as the brown one, from \*bher- 'brown', and as the wild one, from \*ghwer. Neither etymology convinces me. How many brown and wild animals are there? Relying on my Magdalenian dictionary I propose BIR meaning fur (ancient Greek byrsa), especially the fur wherupon a newborn was laid, as origin of a plethora of words. When a fur keeps a newborn warm, a bag made of a hide can also be used to carry a baby around: bear a child. Via analogy this verb is also used for a pregnant woman bearing a child in her womb. Between the two ways of bearing a child, inside and outside of the body, occurs the event called birth, giving birth, and the child is born, a newborn. Most furs are brown, hence BIR is also the origin of PIE \*bher- 'brown'. The bear provides the best fur, longhaired, soft and warm, hence bear Bär beer (while the actual name of the cave bear was ARC, referring to the animal's extraordinary strength, surviving in Greek arktos and Latin ursus). Judging by its name also the boar, Latin aper German Eber, provided a fairly good fur. Also the hare, whose name might be a further derivative of BIR, as hair German Haar.

(to be continued)

Bear, a Magdalenian test case (2 of 3)

Let us have a look at a bunch of PIE homonyms (after Mallory and Adams 2006, page 467):

\*bher- 'brown' -- explained above // \*bher- 'weave,

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twine' — the wool of a sheep that has a longhaired fur like a bear // \*bher- 'seethe, bubble; roast' — the meat of the skinned animal // \*bher- 'strike (through), split, cut' — one has to kill the animal in order to get its precious fur and its meat; the bear must die so the Ice Age people can live; a drawing in the cave Trois Frères shows a bear with dotted fur and blood spurting out of its mouth, the dots are wounds caused by spears, but also visualisations of SAI for life, existence, namely the life of the Ice Age people depending on fur and meat // \*bher- 'carry' — explained above // \*bher- '+- cure with spells and/or with herbs' — we might imagine a healing ceremony involving spells, herbs, and a warm bear fur // \*bhére/o. 'bear (a child)' — explained above // \*bherg- 'bark, growl' — sounds made by a bear // \*bherg- 'keep, protect' — as a bag made of a hide keeps and protects a baby, German bergen. Female bears are devoted mothers, and a bear fur may thus have had a magical meaning for a human mother. On the other hand, bear furs may also have been used in burial ceremonies – enveloping the body in a bear fur could have secured him or her a second life in the beyond, hence bury and burrow (the burrows in Southern England). In fall, a bear goes in quasi hibernation, and returns in spring, which may have been regarded as kind of a regeneration. In autumn, a bear eats up to 150,000 berries, and so English berry German Beere may also come from BIR. Dutch brombeer 'growling beer' is practically the same as German Brombeere 'black berry', so we may assume three possibilities: 1) bears like black berries very much, or 2) black berry thornbushes were grown around settlements in order to protect them from bears and other wild animals, or 3) alleys through black berry thornbushes were used as bear traps. Pear, Latin pira from an unknown source, may refer to the shape of a bear's head, round with a long snout. Beard German Bart is obviously a further derivative of BIR.

(to be continued)

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