# The British Word for 'Fox' and Its Indo-European Origin

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1. The etymology of the British word for 'fox' has hitherto remained unclear. Not only is it difficult to determine its exact Indo-European origin (see 6. below), but it has also proved to be a problem to reconstruct the British forms.

The forms involved are W. *llywarn*, plur. *llewyrn*, MC. *lowarn*, pl. *lowern*[1], B. *louarn*, pl. *leern* > *lern*, Vann. *luhern*.

Jackson, LHEB 384 and HPB 282, reconstructed Proto-British (PBrit.) **lowerno-*, **lowarno-*[2], plur. **lowernī*. This would basically square with Pokorny's reconstruction **louperno-* (**louperno-* > **louerno-* > **lowerno-*, IEW 1179 s.v. **u̯l̥kʷos* (sic)). However it does not explain W. *llywarn* since **lowarno-* would be expected to yield W. **lleuarn*, cf. **iowanko-* > *ieuanc* 'young', **knowenā* > *cneuen* 'nut' (Jackson LHEB 384). Nor does it explain the Breton forms, since **lowerno-*, **lowarno-* would be expected to yield MoB. **laouarn*, Vann. **leùarn* instead of *louarn* = /luarn/, Vann. *luhern* = /lühern/ (with fronting before e), as Jackson himself remarks (HPB 282). He assumes that this development of PBrit. **-ow-* into B. *-ou-*, Vann. *-u-* is identical with that of **iowanko-* into Vann. *iouank* = /yuank/ instead of into expected **ieùank*, and of **lowatrā* 'trough' into Vann. *louer* = /luer/ (with absence of fronting because *-er* arose from MBret. *azr*?) instead of into expected **leùer*. I think that this comparison fails because in the case of **iowanko-* and **lowatrā* the exceptional forms are limited to Haut-Vannetais (HPB 282), whereas in the case of **lowerno-* the 'exceptional' forms are found all over Brittany. A marginal exception to the latter is formed by three ALBB points in the far west of Kernev, where a

[1]Nance's Cornish Dictionary gives a plural form *lewern*. Lauran Toorians, who is preparing a grammar of Middle Cornish, informs me that this form does not exist in Middle Cornish. *lowern* is found in Bewnans Meriasek 2980.

[2]On the interchange of *e* and *a* before *r* + consonant in British see Jackson, LHEB 280, HPB 97.

form *lawarn, lowarn* is found, corresponding to a (non-existent) literary Breton **laouarn* < **lowarno-*. On these forms, see below.

Jackson has, of course, seen these problems. The reason why he nevertheless reconstructs **lowerno-* are the names LOVERNII and LOVERNACI found in old British inscriptions (CIIC 385 and 379 respectively); OW. *Louguern*[3] (Book of Llandaf 229, 12th century); the OB. placename *Bot Louuernoc;* as well as the Gaulish name *Λουερνιος* (LHEB 384 note 2). In principle it is a sound method to explain the oldest forms first, and on the basis of them the younger ones. But if problems arise, as in this case, I think that we must first explain the forms of the well known and well attested British languages rather than base an explanation that does not fit the later forms on a few scattered names from poorly attested and less well known stages. Given the evidence of the modern British languages, I think that a reconstruction **lowerno-* must be abandoned.

As Jackson, LHEB 384 note 2, pointed out, Pedersen's reconstruction (VKG I, 92) **luperno-* > **luwern-* > **luern-* does not account for *e* in the Welsh plural *llewyrn:* **luernī* would be expected to yield **llyyrn,* or, if there was a *w*-glide between **u* and **e* that was phonemicized, **llywyrn.*

2. As an alternative to these two explanations I would like to suggest a protoform **loperno-,* which in my view accounts for all forms. **loperno-* would of course yield **loerno-* (trisyllabic) at some stage.

As to the singular forms, one may assume that **loern* became **luern* by raising of the unaccented hiatus vowel (this form happens to coincide with Pedersen's reconstruction). This raising is exactly parallel to that of *e* in **nepot-* 'nephews' > PBrit. **neotī* > **neöd* (by final affection) > B. *nied* and in **swesor-* 'sisters' > W. *chwior-ydd.* Raising of unstressed hiatus vowels has not been satisfactorily recognized by the handbooks. Jackson LHEB p. 358 writes **esV* and **ePV* > **ey* > **iy,* as if a *y* had arisen automatically. That it is incorrect to assume a glide *y* wherever two vowels come together is shown by cases like W. *gwiw* fit' < **wēsu-,* W. *llew* < [lewū] < Lat. *leō* 'lion' and W. *pydew* 'pit' < Lat. *puteus* (LHEB 357). Here there was no *y*-glide, but a *w*- glide, apparently because of the following rounded vowel. This glide was phonemicized by apocope. Thus we cannot automatically

[3]In OW (unlenited) *gu* is often written for lenited *w*, e.g. *petguar* > MW. *pedwar* (LHEB 391).

write **nepot-* > **neyot-*, nor **swesor-* > **hweyor-*, but we must rather adopt a phonemic reconstruction **neot-*, **hweor-*. I contend that the only satisfactory explanation of *i* in *nied* and *chwiorydd* is to assume raising in hiatus. A close typological parallel is of course OIr. Asg. *siair* < **swesor-* and Gsg. *nieth* < **nepot-*. As raising affected the mid vowel *e* in British, I see no reason why it could not affect the mid vowel *o* as well.

Let us now turn to the attested singular forms. In Welsh, pretonic **u* regularly yielded *y* (cf. *dygaf*, 3 sg. *dwc*), thereby causing the phonetic glide **w* between **u* and **e/a* to become a phoneme, which yields **llywarn*. This phonemicization of w strongly reminds one of W. *llew* < *leō* mentioned above, where automatic *w* was phonemicized by the loss of the final **ū* < **ō* which originally caused it. As Jackson, LHEB 384 note 2, pointed out, *-ou-* in OW. *Louern*, *Louguern* is the usual spelling for what in MW. appears as *-yw-*, cf. *touyssocion* (Book of Llandaf 120) > MW. *tywysogion* 'lords'. I therefore do not think that the OW. forms stand for a **lowern* that was subsequently lost, but rather that they stand for the intermediate stage between **luern* and W. *llywarn*. Note that Pedersen, VKG I, 92, also assumed that W. *llywarn* reflects **luern*.

In Cornish **u* was regularly lowered to *o* (see VKG I 35-36). The subphonemic *w*-glide was phonemicized, probably as the effect of this lowering, which caused the merger with *ow* < PIE **ew*, **ow*, thus giving *lowarn*.

In Breton PBrit. **luern*, **luarn* generally remained as *louarn*. Early Vannetais *luern* (Grég.), MoVann. *luhern* have fronting to *u* = [ü] before a front vowel, the *h* in the modern form being a hiatus filler (thus Jackson HPB 283) OB. *Louuernoc* does not in my view support a Proto-British reconstruction **lowern-* since this not only leaves the later Breton forms but also the OB. placename *Ker Loern* unexplained. I rather think that *Lounernoc* and *Loern* are cases of the well known lowering of **u* to *o*, which affected Breton in an irregular way, probably due to dialect differences (Jackson HPB 125). If this is accepted, the two names can be phonologized as /loern/. *uu* in *Louuernoc* would then represent an automatic glide between *o* and *e*. I think that the latter point can also explain the Western Kernev forms mentioned above, *lowarn*, *lawarn* < **loarn*. Here PrBret. **o*, phonetically probably [ow], with an automatic glide, merged with PrBret. phonemic **ow* (< PIE. **ew*, **ow*) > MBret. *ou* > MoB. *aou*, as in the

geographically close Cornish forms. Note that the reconstructed coexistence of **loern*, **loarn* beside **louern*, **louarn* (with [lu-]) is actually attested in Modern Breton dialects. On the evidence of ALBB map 434, [luarn] is found almost everywhere in Brittany, but points 35 and 41 (N.E. Kernev) have *loarn* and 63 (bordering Vannetais) *loharn*.

Turning now to the plural forms, we may start from **lopernoi* > PBrit. **loernī*. By final affection this yielded PBrit. **loIrn* (disyllabic), which by internal affection gave **löIrn*. For Welsh I assume that, when **ö* was unrounded to *e*, the originally automatic *w*-glide between **ö* and **I* was phonemicized. This may be compared with the rise of *w* in *llywarn* discussed above. Thus **löIrn* resulted in *llewyrn*.[4] The consequences this has for the relative chronology will be discussed in section 4. Here it suffices to note that, since in *llewyrn* the root vowel was not raised in hiatus, the rise of *w* as a phoneme in *llewyrn* must have antedated the raising of *o* to *u* in hiatus. We know that the unrounding of **ö*, which triggered /w/, antedates our oldest OW. records (Jackson, LHEB 605-7). MC. *lowern* has no i-affection of the root vowel, and is therefore probably an innovation based on the sg. *lowarn*.

MoB. *leern* > *lern* probably reflects **lewern* < **löIrn*, but here intervocalic **w* was apparently lost, as it was in *kel* 'news' **kewel* < **kehwedl*, cf. MW. *kyphwedyl* and Vann. *kevel*. Unfortunately Vannetais has innovated its plural form of *luhern* by basing it on the singular (*luhernet*), so that the expected **levern* is not attested, not even on the dialect map of the ALBB. One is therefore free to assume that in Breton an early glide **w* had

[4]4. This may require some explanation. The problem is that one might claim that when *e* and *o* became *i* and *u* in hiatus, *ö* must have become *ü*, because it was also a mid vowel. Thus internal i-affection would not in itself solve the question why *o* in *loernī* was not raised. There are as far as I see, two possible answers:

1. In the Brittonic languages PBrit. *ö* is reflected as *e*. We may claim that the unrounding of *ö* is of an early date. If so, the phonemicization of the glide [w] in [öwI] (phonemically /öI/) must have been early as well, since this phonemicization was caused by the unrounding of *ö*. We may then claim that *öI* had become *ewI* anterior to raising of mid vowels in hiatus, so that the latter could not occur in *ewI*;
2. *ö*, in contrast to *e* and *o*, did not have a phonemic high counterpart before raising in hiatus. PBrit. *ü* was a central vowel, not a front vowel, and therefore did not occupy the 'correct' position in the phonemic system. This situation may have prevented the expected phonetic raising of *ö* to have become phonemic.

never developed in **löIrn*, exactly as in the singular *louarn* etc. Then **löIrn* could have yielded *leern* > *lern* without an intermediate stage.

As we saw, the British forms LOVERNII and LOVERNACI occurring on inscriptions dating from the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century (Jackson, LHEB 280) cannot be interpreted as *lowern-* any more, since this does not explain the later forms. I therefore assume that they simply stand for *loern-*, in which a subphonemic glide has been written. This would yield a terminus post quem for the raising of **o* to **u* in hiatus.

3. We must now turn to two points that could discredit the proposed explanation.

3.1. The first point is a question of relative chronology. Jackson assumes that the Welsh development of pretonic **u* to *ə* (written *y*) was anterior to the internal i-affection. On p. 673 of his LHEB, he writes: "If it [reduction of pretonic **u* to *y* in W.] were later than internal vowel infection it might be held, in theory, that cases of AS. [Anglo-Saxon] *e, i, y*, etc., for original *u* in forms like **Sumina* are due to Pr.W. vowel affection in the first syllable; and that the W. *y* (= *ə*) in such syllables is the reduction of an which is itself the result of vowel affection of *u*. But the opinion has been reached above, par. 176, that the general phenomenon of internal affection of *a, o, e* is to be dated seventh to eighth century, and that it is never, or practically never, found in English place-names, even the latest loans; whereas a considerable number of instances where Pr.W. reduction appears in English have just been listed, including some quite early ones. That internal affection should apply early to *u* only, and much later to *a, o, e* is incredible. Therefore reduction is the older."

This would give a chronology:
1. pretonic *u* > *I* (vel sim.);
2. internal i-affection. The consequences would be unpleasant for the proposed explanation of the fox-word in Welsh, for the following reason. I have assumed the following developments:

| stage: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 (Welsh) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| sg. | **loperno-* | > **loerno-* | > **loern* | > **loern* | > * *luern* | > *llywarn*; |
| pl. | **lopernoi* | > **loerni* | > **loIrn* | > **löIrn* | (> **lewIrn*) | > *lleuyrn*. |

In order to explain pl. *llewyrn* < **loIrn* with unraised **o* versus *llywarn* < **luern* (< **loern*), with raised **o*, I had to assume that internal i-affection and possibly also the unrounding of **ö* (see note 4), which caused the phonemicization of *w*, antedated the raising of **o* to *u*: **loIrn* must have become **löIrn* > **lewIrn* before **loern* became **luern*, otherwise *o* in **loIrn* would have joined in the raising. This indicates the following chronology:

1. internal i-affection (stage 4);
2. *o* > *u* in hiatus (stage 5).

On the other hand, when pretonic *u* became reduced to *I* in Welsh, **loern* must, in my explanation, already have become **luern*, because it took part in this soundlaw. That is, raising of *o* to *u* must have taken place before pretonic *u* became *I*. Thus we need:

1. *o* > *u* in hiatus (stage 5);
2. pretonic *u* > *I* (stage 6).

Combined with the foregoing chronology this leads to the following chronology for my explanation:

1. internal i-affection (stage 4);
2. *o* > *u* in hiatus (stage 5);
3. pretonic *u* > *I* (stage 6).

Jackson's chronology and mine exclude one another, and therefore there must be a mistake somewhere: either the explanation proposed here is incorrect, or Jackson's chronology must be revised.

Jackson's chronology is limited to Anglo-Saxon placenames. I think that there are clear indications that his chronology must be reversed.

1. The internal i-affection occurs in all British languages in exactly the same way. It is therefore likely to be a Proto-British development. As Jackson himself, apparently halfheartedly, notes: "On the other hand, the whole phenomenon [of internal affection] is in general so closely similar in all three languages that it must have had a common origin (...)" (LHEB 617). The

reduction of pretonic *u*, however, only affected Welsh, and to all probability it therefore postdates the British unity.

2. The internal Welsh evidence points in the same direction: the reduction of *u* can be traced in the OW. documents, where beside *i* and *e* one finds *o* and *u* written for it until the twelfth century, not just as a scribal archaism (LHEB 667-670 e.g. *Cun-* and *Dun-* in names in the 12th century book of Llandaf). On the other hand, internal i-affection is almost always consistently written in OW. (LHEB 605-607): affected **o*, **a* are written *e*. Exceptions, due to analogy, are dealt with LHEB 607 (e.g. *agit* beside *hegit* in the same document, with *a*-apparently after a first person **agam* and other forms of the paradigm that had regular *a*-). One must conclude from this situation that in OW. the result of internal i-affection was already phonemicized, i.e. affected *o*, *e*, *a* had merged with *e*; whereas the reduction of pretonic *u* was allophonic, probably until the twelfth century, because OW. orthography shows that pretonic *u* had not yet merged with *y* (which it did in MW.). Internal affection is dated by Jackson into the seventh to eighth century.

I therefore see no evidence for Jackson's chronology in Welsh, but rather for a reversed chronology. But there must be some explanation for the fact that AS. placenames almost never show internal affection, whereas they do attest reduction of pretonic *u*. I think that two points can be made.

1. The evidence of AS. placenames is evidence of developments outside Welsh proper. It is perhaps conceivable that outside Welsh Jackson's chronology does hold. In that case one could assume that the starting point of the pretonic reduction of **u* lay just outside Welsh, so that it reached Welsh proper at a later stage, viz. after internal i-affection.

2. Even if one accepts the AS. placename evidence for Welsh itself, as Jackson contends, this does not actually prove his chronology. Perhaps it is true that the earliest instances of reduction of *u* antedate those of internal affection. But what really matters is when both became phonemic. As we have seen, internal Welsh evidence points to the fact that reduction of *u* was automatic, non-phonemic until well into the OW period, whereas internal affection had ended, i.e. had been phonemicised, before the OW period. This means that any *u*

became reduced *u* both before and after internal i-affection until the twelfth century, because it was an automatic process taking place over a long period of time. That is, of course, if we try to connect the AS placename evidence with internal Welsh facts. In conclusion, I suggest the following relative chronology, which differs from Jackson's own view in a slight but to my mind essential way:

1. beginning of reduction of pretonic **u* as an automatic process in Welsh (British, dialectal);
2. internal i-affection (British, general);
3. final stage of reduction of pretonic *u*, and phonemicization of its reflex as /ə/ = MW *y* (Welsh).

In order to explain W. *llywarn* and *llewyrn* one may assume that the raising of *o* to *u* in hiatus took place between stage 2. and stage 3. There is to my knowledge no independent evidence for the latter chronology, but there is no counterevidence either. My point is that the raising of *o* to *u* in hiatus can be fitted into a relative chronology, so that the Welsh fox-word can be explained without violating what we know of the relative chronology of Welsh.

3.2. As a second possible objection, one might wonder how it is possible that **o* followed by a vowel in **loerno-* did not merge with PBrit. **ow* < PIE **ew*, **ow* at a very early stage, especially because there is evidence for some sort of *w*-glide in **loerno-*. I can think of two possible reasons:

1. One might assume that there was still some independent reflex of PIE. **p* that remained for a long time, blocking merger with **ow*. It has been demonstrated for Irish that there must have been some independent reflex of **p* until a very late stage: Carney, Ériu 26, 1975, 53-65, Kortlandt, Ériu 33' 1982, 74-76. Kortlandt assumes, to my mind correctly, that the development of **sp* to Brit. **f* shows that at least in this position there was an independent reflex of **p* up to the lenition of **s* (dated by Jackson in the second half of the first century, LHEB 517 ff.).

2. It is undisputed that PIE **ew* and **ow* merged in what phonemically can be written as *ow*. But to assume that this was

the exact phonetic shape will hardly do in view of its later reflexes in Welsh and Vannetais. MW has *eu*, a "retracted, rather open, unrounded vowel" (LHEB 370) + a "high central vowel" (LHEB 305). A development **ow* > MW *eu* would presuppose a spontaneous fronting of **ow* that is unmotivated. However, if we assume that **ow* was phonetically something like [*əw*], with a mid central vowel, the development to W. *eu* would simply involve fronting of *w* by assimilation to central *ə*. In Vannetais we find *eu* written, which phonetically is [œw'] or [ɛw'] (Jackson, HPB 275). A development from **ow* would again involve spontaneous fronting of a back vowel, which is unlikely. But a development from **əw* to Vann. *eu* can simply be explained along the same line as suggested for Welsh. The only difference between Welsh and Vannetais *eu* is that the latter was completely fronted, whereas the former remained central. This fronting of Vannetais is part of the general Breton rule that central vowels were fronted: Brit. central **u* remained central in Welsh (*u*), but became fronted in Breton (written *u*, pronounced [ü]); PIE. **ā* and **ō* > PBrit. approximately **ɔ̄* (Jackson, LHEB) > PSWBrit. **ω* (Jackson's notation for a low mid vowel, HPB) > B. *eu* = [ö] (but W. *aw*, *o*). The development of **əw* into MC *ow*, MB *ou* can easily be explained by assuming asimilation in rounding of *ə* to *w*.

Thus, I think that PIE **ew* and **ow* merged in British into what was phonetically probably [aw]. If this is accepted it would be feasible that when **loerno-* yielded **[lowerno]-* the result did not merge with **Law]*.

4. The argument may now be summarized.

a. Jackson reconstructed **lowern-* on the basis of some of the oldest British forms, but he could not explain the common, well known modern singular forms W. *llywarn*, B. *louarn;*

b. Pedersen reconstructed **lupern-* > **luern-*, which explains the singular forms, but not the W. plural *llewyrn*, which must be old because the pair *llywarn - llewyrn* is irregular;

c. In this paper it is suggested that **lopern-* > **loern-* can explain both the singular and the plural forms of British: the sg. **loerno-* yielded **luern-* by raising of *o* before a vowel (in hiatus); in the pl. **loernī* the *o* was not raised, probably because i-affection (*o-e*

> *e-y*) caused the subphonenlic *w*-glide between *o* and *e* to be phonemicized, so that there was no hiatus any more, giving **lewIrn*.

The raising of *o* to *u* in hiatus has a clear parallel in the raising of *e* to *i* in hiatus (**swesor-* > **hweor-* > W. *chwior-ydd* etc.); the phonemicization of an originally automatic *w*-glide has well known parallels also (e.g. *leō* > W. *llew*). The only *assumption* that was made is that internal i-affection antedated the raising of *o* to *u*. The latter can be fitted into the—revised—relative chronology of British.

5. The Proto-British **loerno-*, which I reconstruct, squares well with the presumed Irish cognates *Loern*, later *Loarn* (a personal name), but so would **luerno-* or **louerno-*. A substantive *loarn* 'fox', which could certify the connection with British, has only one uncertain attestation, see Dictionary of the Irish Language ad loc.

Gaulish Λουερνιος does not necessarily influence the reconstruction of Insular Celtic **loerno-* (or **loperno-*, see section 3.2.). Firstly, since it is a name, its meaning is unknown: it need not belong to the Insular 'fox'-word. Secondly, now that McCone (forthc.) has convincingly argued for an Insular Celtic linguistic unity and against a Gallo-British unity, the Gaulish form is, at best, a distant relative of the Insular form. It could have gone through developments not shared by British. In the third place, Λουερνιος need not represent /lowern/; /loern/ with υ written for a purely phonetic *w*-glide (as in the OBrit. and OBret. forms), or /luern/, with **o* raised independently from British, are equally plausible.

One may conclude that the Irish and Gaulish evidence neither confirms nor falsifies the protoform suggested for British. We will see that a confirmation of **loperno-* comes from Indo-European.

6. We may now turn to the Indo-European etymology. It is possible to distinguish three roots with the approximate meaning 'fox' on formal grounds:

a. **lup-* or **rup-* in Av. *raopi-* 'kind of dog' and Av. *urupi-*, *urupa-* (which probably reflect a stem in a laryngeal, see Hoffmann, *Drei indogermanische Tiernamen in einem Avesta-Fragment*, MSS 22,

1967, p. 31-32) 'weasle, dog-like animal'. As far as the root is concerned, Skt. *lopāśá-* 'jackal, fox' vel sim., MoPers. *rōbāh*, Osset. *robas* < **loupēk'o-* belong here, but the suffix **-ēk'-* points to a connection with b. However, if one takes a closer look at the formation, *lopāśá-* etc. would represent a Nsg. **loup-ēk'*, with long *-e-*, of which an *o*-stem is derived. This type of derivation is very uncommon, and must therefore be seriously questioned in this particular instance. In view of this it is perhaps better to connect Skt. *-āśa-* with Iranian forms like Av. *kahrkāsa-* 'vulture', Khotansak. *murāsa-* 'peacock' (see Bailey, TPS 1954, 145). Mayrhofer KEWA s.v. *lopāśáh* assumed that *lop-* < **laup-* originally contained the same root as b., but was reformed on the basis of Skt. *lóman-* 'hair' < **lauman-*, cf. later Skt. *lomaśā* , *lomāśa-, lomālikā-* id.[5] But if its suffix cannot be compared with that of Gr. ἀλώπηξ, there is no reason to insist on the connection of *lopāśá-* with ἀλώπηξ, and Mayrhofer's assumption becomes unnecessary because we have independent evidence for IIr. **lup-*, **laup-* in Avestan. It is tempting to connect Lat. *lupus* 'wolf' with this root, which would surely make the etymon part of the PIE. protolanguage.

We may note that the original meaning of **lup-* is not necessarily 'fox', but it seems clear that the term must have denoted some dog-like animal which was not a wolf (PIE. **wl̥k$^{w}$os*).

b. Gr. ἀλώπηξ (obl. *-εκ-*) and Arm. *aluēs*, Gsg. *aluesu* 'fox' point to PIE. **h$_2$lop-ēk'-*. The same root is probahly found in Lith. *lãpė* and Latv. *lapsa* 'fox'. As prof. Kortlandt suggested to me, *lãpė* could have taken its *-ė* from *vilkė* 'she-wolf'. In that case the old form may have survived in Latv. *lapsa* < **h$_2$lŏp-ēk'-* (thus Pokorny, JEW. 1179, except for the initial laryngeal). It is generally held that the Baltic forms had an initial **w-*, but this is merely an assumption. The basic meaning of this root was certainly 'fox'.

c. The third root is **wlp-* which is reflected in Lith. *vilpišỹs* 'wild cat', MPers. *gurpak* 'housecat' and probably also in Lat. *volpēs* 'fox'. In view of the correspondence between the Lithuanian and Persian forms the original meaning of **wlp-* may have been

[5] 5. Cf. Engl. *fox*, Dutch *vos*, German *Fuchs* < **puk-s-*, which are probably cognate with Russ. *puch* 'down' < **puks-* and Skt. *púccha-* 'tail' < **puks-* (Franck-Van Wijk s.v. *vos*, Mayrhofer, KEWA s.v. *púccha-*, who gives other parallels).

'wild cat'. In that case the meaning of *volpēs* is secondary. This semantic shift is not improbable, because both the wild cat and the fox are rather small, solitary, reddish-brown predators that prefer woodlands.

The approach presently followed differs from previous approaches, which assume a common root that was reformed for onomatopoetic or tabuistic reasons, or under the influence of other words (e.g. 'tail', 'hair'). Although it cannot be denied that such factors might have played a role, the decisive point is to my mind that in this case different forms seem to correlate with different meanings to a degree that cannot be accidental. The latter necessarily means that different etyma must be distinguished: one finds *$h_2$*lŏp-* (*ĕk'-*) 'fox', **wlp-*, probably meaning 'wild cat' and **lup-* *~ **leup-* 'dog-like animal, not wolf'. What may **lup-*, **leup-* have meant?

Now that the location of the PIE. homeland becomes clearer and clearer, and the area to the north of the Black Sea is the most likely candidate (see Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans,* London 1989), we can draw up a list of animals that may have been known to the Proto-Indo-Europeans because they inhabited the same country. As far as our present category is concerned, we know that foxes were hunted by the people of the Sredni Stog and Yamnaya-cultures, which are now considered to be the Indo-Europeans (see Mallory *op. cit.* p. 200, 212, also 190). There is also archeological evidence for the presence of wild cats in this area at the time. This confirms the reconstruction of separate etyma for 'wild cat' and 'fox'. But apart from these two small predators there occurs a separate species of fox, the prairy fox (*Vulpes corzac*), which the Indo-Europeans must have known, and, being at least part-time hunters, have distinguished from the ordinary fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). It is possible that this species was termed **leup-*. This animal, like the jackal, which lived more to the south (but see below), inhabited the open country of the steppes. It is therefore likely that when the Indo-Iranians moved south and encountered jackals, they used the word for prairy fox to designate it.

Alternatively, it may be noted that the northernmost territory of the common jackal (*Canis aureus*) runs along the northern shore of the Black Sea where we may locate part of the Indo-European homeland. So possibly **lup-*, **leup-*

originally denoted the jackal. This is perhaps semantically more plausible than the meaning 'steppe fox', because, as we have seen, **leup-* means 'jackal' in Indo-Iranian; moreover, since jackals, like wolves, hunt in packs (in contradistinction to foxes and wild cats), and since jackals look very much like wolves, the meaning of Lat. *lupus* would be easy to explain (jackals are not native to Italy).

I conclude that there is a good possibility that the three roots that were distinguished above indeed referred to three different animals known to the ancient Indo-Europeans, which legitimates setting up three different etyma.

We have see that the PIE. word for the common fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) was **h₂lŏp-ĕk'-*. The ablaut of the root vowed (**ō* in Greek and Armenian, **ŏ* in Baltic) points to an odd root noun, which implies that the suffix **-ek'-* is a later addition, although it is difficult to consider it an independent innovation of Baltic and Armeno-Greek. But we must remember that it is not certain that Latv. *lapsa* indeed reflects this suffix (it may contain **-ik'-* or **-is-*, like Lith. *vilpišỹs*), and if it does not there is no problem in seeing **-ek'-* as a later addition.

Thus British **loerno-* < **lop-* is confirmed by the Indo-European evidence, and, conversely, **loerno-* confirms that Gr. *ἀλώπηξ* reflects a PIE. root. Moreover, Celt. **loperno-* indicates that the word was originally a root noun, because it does not share the suffix **-ek'-* of Greek and Armenian.

If the argument is accepted we may reconstruct the following paradigm for PIE. 'fox':

nom. sg. **h₂lop-s* (Gr. *ἀλώπηξ*, Arm. *aluēs*),
ace. sg. **h₂lŏp-m* (Celtic **loperno-*, Baltic **lŏp-*),
gen. sg. **h₂lp-os* ? (not attested).

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