The LAMP project

Due to recent advances in ancient genetics, a new picture of prehistory is emerging. In the LAMP project we cast light on the aspects of prehistoric peoples that make them human: their languages and beliefs. The project asks three fundamental questions about the early speakers of Indo-European:

1. How did they talk?
   We reconstruct the sounds, grammar and vocabulary of the prehistoric language stages from which the extant languages descend.

2. What did they talk about?
   We compare the relevant parts of the reconstructed vocabulary with mythological and archaeological evidence in order to establish fragments of the myths, poetry and rituals of prehistory.

3. How can we know?
   We integrate the methodologies currently developing in the interfaces between the traditional fields of linguistics, archaeology and mythology.
Introducing $h_1ru^dh^ah_2$ ‘Redhead’

archaeology
- woman, 19 years old
- Yamnaya (western Ukraine)
- 3100 BC

ancient genomics
- mix of steppe ancestry and European farmer ancestry
- related to present-day populations of northern Europe
Prehistoric migrations and languages

Subgrouping the Indo-European languages

- Proto-Indo-European
- Proto-Core Indo-European
- Balto-Slavic
- Indo-Iranian
- Anatolian
- Tocharian
- Greek
- Albanian
- Armenian
- Tocharian
- Italic
- Celtic
- Germanic
Research question: how did they talk?

**Spiritual life**
- *djeus* ‘Sky God’
- *kr̚ed d̚eh₁- ‘believe’
- *h₂aušös* ‘Dawn Goddess’
- *puh₂sö* ‘God of Pasture’

**Natural phenomena**
- *h₂uēh₁ntos* ‘wind’
- *nokʷts* ‘night’
- *meh₁ñots* ‘moon’
- *h₂stēr* ‘star’

**Kinship**
- *ph₂tēr* ‘father’
- *su̯esōr* ‘sister’
- *daihu̯er* ‘husband’s brother’
- *u̯edʰ- ‘to lead, to marry’

**Animals**
- *mūs* ‘mouse’
- *Iūs* ‘louse’
- *ulkw̱os* ‘wolf’
- *h₁ekuos* ‘horse’

**Wheeled vehicles**
- *kw̱ekʷlom* ‘wheel’
- *h₂aksis* ‘axle’
- *h₃nebʰ- ‘nave’
- *u̯egʰ- ‘convey in a vehicle’

**Textile technology**
- *u̯ebʰh* ‘to weave’
- *h₂yl₁nah₂* ‘wool’
- *sjeuh- ‘to sew’
- *u̯es* ‘to wear a garment’
Research question: what did they talk about?

Mythology

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<th>Sky God</th>
<th>Horse Twins</th>
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Linguistics

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Archaeology

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Legend:
- ITALIC: Italic
- CELTIC: Celtic
- GERMANIC: Germanic
- GREEK: Greek
- ARMENIAN: Armenian
- ALBANIAN: Albanian
- INDO-IRANIAN: Indo-Iranian
- BALTO-SLAVIC: Balto-Slavic
- PCIE: Paleo-CE

Map showing the spread of Sky God and Horse Twins across different regions and time periods.
Research question: how can we know?
The research team

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A collaboration between LAMP and the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS) was established in 2020.
Centre for Indo-European Language and Culture

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Prof. Peter Jackson Rova, Stockholm University
Ass. Prof. Thomas Olander, University of Copenhagen
Head of Research Torun Zachrisson, Upplandsmuseet
Irene Elmerot (student representative), Stockholm University
Output: new cross-disciplinary book series

Stockholm Studies in Indo-European Language and Culture

This new book series is intended for research into the older stages of the Indo-European language family from a multitude of perspectives, including history of religions, archaeology, ancient DNA and historical linguistics.

- **Indo-European Interfaces** (in production)
- **Indo-European Ecologies** (in preparation)
- **Indo-European Afterlives** (planned)
Indo-European Fire Rituals
Cattle and Cultivation, Cremation and Cosmogony

Anders Kaliff and Terje Oestigaard

Routledge
2023

Werewolves, Warriors and Winter Sacrifices
Unmasking Kivik and Indo-European Cosmology in Bronze Age Scandinavia

Anders Kaliff & Terje Oestigaard

Uppsala University
2022
The Indo-European Language Family
A Phylogenetic Perspective
Edited by Thomas Olander
Cambridge University Press
2022

The Great Indo-European Horse Sacrifice
4000 Years of Cosmological Continuity
from Sintashta and the Steppes to Scandinavian Skeid
ANDERS KALIFF & TERJE OESTIGAARD
Uppsala University
2020
Output: reaching a wider audience

Karin Bojs
author, science journalist
honorary doctor at
Stockholm University

Karin Bojs’ latest book *Europas mödrar* (English: *The mothers of Europe*) was prepared in dialogue with the LAMP research group.
Output: reaching a wider audience

With an ambitious outreach component the project will communicate the understanding of the variability of the linguistic and cultural landscape throughout history to a wider audience. By making the historical facts more accessible to the public, the project will provide a bulwark against nationalism and chauvinism and contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex questions concerning language, culture and religion in modern society.