



IE kinship terms as an interdisciplinary topic

Reconstruction of social realities –anthropological views
and methodological considerations¹

Veronika Milanova

University of Vienna (veronika.milanova@univie.ac.at)

Draft. Not for quotations!

In the recent years I've become more anthropologically-oriented. And I've tried to squeeze out of these Sumerian literary texts whatever they can reveal about the Sumerian society and about the Sumerian culture, in general, and psychological aspects of the Sumerian culture. Unfortunately for me or perhaps fortunately, in some respect, the authors of the Sumerian literary documents were not scholarly-oriented sociologists. They were visionary poets and emotional bards. So whatever you want to learn about the society, you have to read between the lines and work inferentially and indirectly.

S.N. Kramer. *The Sumerian woman* (talk, Chicago, Oct., 16 1975)²

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0 Introduction

When analysing the vocabulary of an ancient language, researchers do not usually limit themselves to examining morphological and syntactic structures and phonological peculiarities but aim to decipher what social and cultural realities are implied in the lexical items. This task is simplified when they have literary texts, official documents and especially personal letters in this language. The picture becomes fuller if there is also abundant archaeological evidence of the culture under study. However, even in this favourable case the image is far from being ultimate. Many questions will remain unanswered and call for further research and reanalysis.

When working with the vocabulary of a reconstructed language, such as Proto-Indo-European (PIE), we are deprived of almost all of those auxiliary means. There are only two trustworthy relics left: linguistic material from the daughter languages and descendant cultures. On the basis of the daughter languages a hypothetical language can be reconstructed. But can one reconstruct beliefs, traditions and especially daily life of the hypothetical ethnic group on the basis of attested cultures? To what extent is the comparative method applicable and effective in this case?

Like most cultures on Earth, IE cultures have evolved in circumstances of massive and deep contact and interaction with a great diversity of other peoples so that it is sometimes difficult to decide which elements should be considered inherited and which borrowed. This is especially the case in regard to mythology and religion. As it was eloquently formulated by West (2007: 24):

People change their gods and their mythologies more readily and quickly than they change their declensions and conjugations, and more capriciously.

A similar mythological or literary motive in different IE branches does not always suggest that it should be common PIE. It might as well be

2 An audio provided by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7pROU9ajcs> (03.04.2017).

an instance of horizontal transmission or an ‘areal’ phenomenon (*ibid.*: 19–24).

Even the most ancient attested IE civilisations were already hybrid in all respects.³ Thus, the Indo-Iranian tribes were dramatically influenced by the culture and language of the Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex (cf. Anthony 2007: 454f.). The further development of the two branches makes the matter even more sophisticated. The Achaemenid Empire was the result of acculturation and integration processes between the Iranian-speaking (half-)nomads and the Elamite state (Henkelman 2003, 2011 with references). Quite like the IE cultures of Ancient Anatolia (cf. Gilan 2008), they can therefore hardly be separated from all the other cultures of the Ancient Orient. On the other hand, the Indo-Aryans, their close relatives, were integrated into the South Asian continuum (Flood 1997 [1996]: 23–50). The analysis of substrate words (around 1000; esp. architectural terms⁴ and words denoting social statuses⁵) in Greek (cf., e.g., Beekes 2000, 2010) indicates that the Greek civilisation had also evolved in circumstances of long-termed and (relatively) peaceful cohabitations of IE and non-IE cultures.

Archaeological evidence, although not as reliable as in the case of historically attested cultures and genetic data, are auxiliary means here. The usage of these means and all challenges associated with them are, however, not the topic of the present article. This is the subject of the book *Language and Prehistory of the Indo-European Peoples* (Hyllested et al. 2017), in which colleagues competent in these questions give an account of their work.

The present article is about kinship terms from the perspective of Kinship Studies. This field of research is a branch of social and cultural anthropology, a discipline that has collected a great amount of empirical data about various human societies from all over the world. Those data can be used by historians, historical linguists and archaeologists in their analyses of ancient civilisations and in

3 This is typologically common and normal for any society because the genesis of human races is fundamentally different from animal breeding (see Boas 1944 [1911]: 68ff.).

4 E.g., *λαβύρινθος* ‘labyrinth’, *πύργος* ‘tower’, *ἀσάμινθος* ‘bathtub’.

5 E.g., *τύραννος* ‘absolute ruler’, *πρύτανις* ‘lord’, and *βασιλεύς* ‘king, chief’.

reconstructions of hypothetical societies. Scholars no longer assume that certain contemporary indigenous ethnic groups are necessarily similar to our remote ancestors – this theory was abandoned long ago, see 1.1 below. However, anthropological evidence enables scholars to construct a more realistic scenario, closer to attested human practices, for the society in question.

This paper does not aim to systematically describe all schools and approaches of Kinship Studies. Time and volume limitations would not permit it anyway. This will rather be a short survey of trends, topics and authors relevant specifically for historical linguists and other philologists who are interested in kinship studies and wonder where to begin. I will mostly concentrate on problematic topics which are ignored or misunderstood by most historical linguists (from my personal experience) and will leave out certain less problematic points (e.g., the alliance theory of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969 [1949, 1967])) that have been frequently quoted in the literature about IE kinship terms.

The first section presents a discussion of kinship as a phenomenon of human life. The second section is devoted to kinship terms and their meaning.

1 The essence of kinship

1.1 Classical evolutionism and foundation of the discipline

In his book on Indo-European kinship terms, Delbrück (1889: 387) suggested that philologists should take into consideration “die Naturwissenschaft von Menschen, welche in den Kreisen der Naturforscher und Juristen ihre Vertreter findet”. With “Naturforscher” he meant Charles R. Darwin (*The origin of species*, 1859) and his theory of evolution. “Juristen” must have been, first of all, Lewis Henry Morgan (*Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, 1871; *Ancient Society*, 1877), Johann J. Bachofen (*Das Mutterrecht. Eine Untersuchung über die Gynaiokratie der Alten Welt nach ihrer religiösen und rechtlichen Natur*, 1861), and Henry J. S. Maine (*Ancient Law*, 1861), who tried to apply Darwin’s theory of

evolution to explain how human society had been developing. Therefore, this first school of social anthropology, which is now referred to as “classical evolutionism”, was actually, as Delbrück also expressed it, comparative jurisprudence with elements of biology.

It would undoubtedly be wrong to speak of classical evolutionists in negative terms only. Their work raised fundamental questions; and anthropology and kinship studies came into being as a consequence. One of Morgan’s inventions, “kinship systems” (see 2.1), is still applicable in ethnography (see, e.g., Parkin 2015); and so is another useful tool: the “genealogical method” formulated by William H. R. Rivers (Rivers 1900; see also Fischer 1996), whose views were very close to those of classical evolutionists at the beginning of his career.

Nevertheless it should be pointed out that the theories of this school were speculative because they were based more on legal texts and less on observations of real-life practices of indigenous people. That is why already the following generation of scholars, who were involved in empiric research, criticized and abandoned most of them. This concerns, first of all, Morgan’s assumption that all of mankind undergoes the same evolutionary stages, from “savagery” to “barbarism” to “civilisation”. The idea that some societies were more advanced, while others were lagging behind was in accord with colonial policies, ideas and moods of that time, but this was soon refuted by Franz U. Boas (*The mind of primitive man*, 1911) and other representatives of cultural relativism.

1.2 Matriarchy. Power and Structure. Kinship and Lineage

1.2.1 The concepts of “patriarchy” and “matriarchy” are often used in historical linguistics. However, in contemporary anthropology, the fact that matriarchy as a stage of social development has never taken place is background knowledge and ceased to be a topic of discussion a long time ago. The reason for abandoning this concept was a lack of empirical evidence. There are societies in which certain rights and duties can be transmitted through the female line, but women do not possess exclusive power in any of them.

This speculative idea was suggested by Bachofen (1861) and incorporated by Morgan in his scheme “savagery – barbarism –

civilisation". Ultimately, it was based on a reanalysis of stories about the Amazons and the allegedly matrilineal Lycians written by Ancient Greek historians.⁶ Matriarchy on par with preceding primeval promiscuity was viewed by Morgan as the earliest stage of the human family evolution corresponding to savagery (1997 [1871]: 142ff.). He assumed that ancient "savages" knew very little about the process of procreation and (especially males) did not distinguish their own children from other children in the "horde"; they also had no permanent "mates". That is why he assumed that the first socially ordered type of family was matriarchal. Barbarism was associated with patriarchy, a further stage of family evolution. Finally, at the stage of civilisation descent became bilateral.

The second important point here, which is usually ignored by philologists, is the fact that the definitions "matriarchal" and "patriarchal" are only used by social anthropologists when they are quoting some 19th-century source. This is due to the imprecision of these definitions. "Power" is an excessively abstract notion and is difficult to analyse. The Anthropology of power and inequality is now a separate field of research (see, e.g., articles in Kelly 1993, Cheater 1999 and Sweely 1999). Therefore, if one wishes to say that certain rights and duties are traceable through the male or female line, one

6 Cults of mother goddesses whose traces are found in some IE cultures are often considered to be a feature of primeval matriarchy of pre-IE inhabitants (cf. Gimbutas 1991, 1994). Up-to-date anthropological and ethnographic data are hardly supportive of such hypotheses. This deity, or mythological motive, or a complex of mythological views, which can be dated down to the Palaeolithic, is thousands of years older than the PIE people and any substrate people they had contact with, and it has nothing to do with female authority. As evidence indicates, cults of mother goddesses or other powerful female deities get along well with (even radical) androcentrism in the society. It does not take long to find examples: consider Kālī and other similar goddesses in Hinduism (Brown 1992; Flood 1997 [1996]: 174–197, esp. 191); Gaia, Athena, Artemis in Ancient Greece (Downing 1992, Clark 1998, Cole 1998); Magna Mater in Ancient Rome (Salzman 1992); the Power Goddess in Celtic culture ("Herrschaftsgöttin" in McCone 2016). The Mother Goddess is anyway a research topic in itself, which has been extensively studied but is still rather vague (cf. Olson 1992, Davidson 1998).

uses the terms “patrilineal” and “matrilineal”. The latter term in particular does not necessarily have anything to do with power or authority. Thus, Robert H. Lowie (Lowie 2004 [1950]: 59) having collected empirical examples from various unilineal societies, drew an eloquent conclusion:

As males are not the downtrodden drudges of termagant wives in matrilineal tribes, so females are by no means the mere toys and slaves of their husbands among patrilineal peoples.

The same is true for such structural points as “patrilocal” and “matrilocal” residence.

1.2.2. Thirdly, one should take into consideration the difference between *kinship (filiation)* and *lineage (descent, succession)*. These definitions were formulated by the school of British functionalism, first of all, by Edward E. Evans-Pritchard (e.g., 1940, 1950) and Meyer Fortes (e.g., 1945) and further discussed by Harold W. Scheffler (1966, 1986), Marshall D. Sahlins (1965) and many other scholars. A history of this research and a systematic description and discussion of these anthropological definitions can be found, for example, in Holý (1996: 44–7, 51–123) and Kraus (1997).

To put it simply and shortly, *kinship* is the Ego’s relation to other persons from his father’s and mother’s family and is universally bilateral (or fairly universally, see section 1.3), whereas *lineage* presents how certain rights and duties (a corporative status) are transmitted from one generation to another (land rights, titles, crown etc.) and is usually unilineal (patri-/matrilineal). Therefore, it would be wrong to say that in a patrilineal group the mother and her family are not related or irrelevant to the Ego. It only means that they do not share certain rights and duties with the Ego’s lineage. *Kinship* is a *domestic domain* and *lineage* is a *politico-jural/public domain*. *Kinship* is egocentric: it describes how the Ego is related to other persons. *Lineage* is oriented towards the (real or putative) progenitor. *Kinship* exists in all societies (or in almost all, see 1.3), and *lineage* is optional. Therefore, if a society is not patrilineal, it need not be matrilineal. Moreover, there are societies in which one set of rights and duties are transmitted through the male line, and the other set

through the female line. In this case, we deal with *double descent* (in itself a problematic definition, see Schneider 1962, Holý 1996: 121–3, and Kraus 1997: 143ff. with references).

As it has hopefully become clear, it is incorrect to characterise a certain ethnic group as patrilineal or matrilineal. One can only say that a society has patrilineal or matrilineal descent, patrilocal or matrilocal residence. Lineage and residence are only two of many other traits of the society. Although it can be a determinative trait and may under certain circumstances acquire essential ideological meaning, patrilineage taken alone (and even in combination with overt androcentrism) still does not have to be automatically associated with women behind bars excluded from all spheres of social and religious life.⁷

1.3 Nature and Culture. Is blood thicker than water?

1.3.1. The assumption that human kinship as a part of social life is not completely based on biology emerged already in the works of classical evolutionists (Maine 1861: 27ff. described it as “legal fiction”; see also Parkin & Stone 2004: 10) and has been part of the scholarly debate ever since. Thus David É. Durkheim (1898: 316) differentiated between biological blood ties (*consanguinité*) and kinship as a social phenomenon (*parenté*). Similarly, Arnold van Gennep (1906: xxvi–vii) made a distinction between *parenté physique* and *parenté social*. Bronisław Malinowski (1913 in Holý 1996: 16ff.; see also Barnes 1955) introduces two definitions borrowed from the Roman law: *Pater* (social father) vs. *Genitor* (procreator). Here it should be stressed that the Genitor is not necessarily a biological father in the sense modern natural science understands it but “a man who is

7 Among numerous examples one can mention Medieval Novgorod (11th–15th c.). It was a fairly androcentric society with patrilineal descent, which is proven by the fact that there are very few feminine personal names in Novgorod Birch Bark Literacy. In those letters and documents women referred to themselves by a possessive adjective or the like derived from the name of their husband (or their father?). Nevertheless, the contents of those documents show that especially in the earlier periods women had quite a wide range of rights. They could inherit and own property and take part in trade (cf. Levin 1983).

believed by members of his community to have impregnated the child's mother or to contribute in some other way to the being of the child" (Holý 1996: 16). It means therefore that *physical kinship* quite like *social kinship* is not a biological reality but a culturally determined concept. At this point a logical question arises: what, then, is the difference between them?

1.3.2. This question was articulately asked and answered by David M. Schneider (2004 [1972], 1984), who began his career in the functionalistic tradition and later got closer to symbolic and interpretive anthropology (cf. Geertz 1975; Wagner 1975). He stated that it is erroneous to treat kinship as a universal, separate and autonomous phenomenon because in some cultures (in Schneider's view) it does not exist as such. Comparing the domain of 'kinship' with that of 'religion' and 'politics', he defined them as *conglomerate* (1972) or *bounded* (1984) systems (in contrast to *pure systems*⁸) and stressed that the so-called 'kinship' component, which includes a "shared bio-genetic substance" and/or a "code for conduct" ("enduring solidarity"), is only one of many components constituting the kinship system. If both elements of the 'kinship component' occur together, they constitute a consanguineal kinship term, if only the "enduring solidarity" is applied, it constitutes an affinal kinship term. The shared bio-genetic substance alone forms the category of "relatives in nature".

Conglomerate systems and *pure* systems have different functions. Whereas a pure system describes the state of affairs – *How Things Are* – a conglomerate system is oriented towards prescribing people "how to behave under ideal circumstances" – *If That Is So, How Then Should One Act* (Schneider 2004 [1972] : 264, emphasis added). Just as it is culturally dependent what it implies, e.g., to be a priest in a certain religion, or to be a citizen of some country, it is likewise culturally dependent what it means to be someone's mother or brother:

The domain we have traditionally called 'kinship' is Ego-centered, consisting of a network of related *persons*, such as mother, father,

8 Pure systems (as I understand it) are, for example, such di-/trichotomies as "big vs. average vs. small", "above vs. below", "left vs. right". Those are therefore single-element-based taxonomies.

brother, etc. It is not hard to see that this domain is constructed out of many different kinds of components from many different systems. Thus each unit in the system, such as 'mother' or 'father', is defined first by what might be called a pure 'kinship' component, second by an age and generation component, third by a sex-role component, fourth by a class component, and by other components of other kinds as well... Is there one good reason why a particular bundle of components should be characterized by only one of its components rather than by another? There is ONE good reason and that is when, in the particular culture we are studying, it is done that way. (Schneider 2004 [1972]: 263–4, original emphasis)

The “particular culture” Schneider meant was modern-day USA and Western Europe (and related cultures), in which 'kinship' had been “culturally segregated as a domain” (*ibid.*: 265–6) as a counterpart of biological reproduction (partially due to advances in natural sciences, cf. Parkin & Stone 2004: 19). The same critique concerns other “metacultural categories embedded in European culture” (Schneider 1984: 184): economics, politics and religion. As adults brought up in these respective countries, ethnographers try to decompose a foreign culture into a 'kinship system', an 'economic system', a 'political system' and 'religion' because this is what is common in their own culture. According to Schneider, this is methodologically wrong. Instead, he suggests an unbiased and holistic cultural analysis “apart from . . . institutional segments . . . organizational segments, or . . . social structural segments” (Schneider 2004 [1972]: 272). Thus one should, first of all, clarify how members of the society under study segment their culture themselves, and in particular, whether they have 'kinship' in the same sense as in Western countries (“genealogical grid”). And only after that can one design lineages and classify kinship terminologies.

Radical as it might seem, Schneider's work has had a great impact on kinship studies. In the preface to *Kinship and Family. An anthropological reader* (Parkin & Stone 2004), the chapter devoted to him is thus referred to as 'the Schneiderian turn', and his contribution to the discipline is compared to that of L. H. Morgan. It would be wrong to state that kinship studies have lost their significance

completely since then, but they have radically changed. New questions and challenges have been posed, new fields of research such as *gender* and *queer studies* have emerged. There are also attempts to reformulate the name of the discipline, for example, to exchange the notion of *kinship* for a broader concept of *relatedness* (Carsten 2000). I will expand on this in section 2.3.

2 Kinship terms

Whether kinship can be viewed as an autonomous, universally attested phenomenon, and whether we should take Schneider's considerations as the ultimate conclusion is still a question even for anthropologists (see the critical essays on Schneider's legacy in Feinberg & Ottenheimer 2001). However, as far as kinship terms are concerned – the topic that is more crucial for philologists – it seems that Schneider really had a point. These lexical items are usually polysemous and do not construct an isolated system within the vocabulary of any language.

2.1 Kinship systems

Because contemporary social anthropology positions itself as an empiric discipline that tries to avoid global theoretical generalisations, the analysis and comparison of kinship terms and terminologies are not at the centre of attention any more (Wolfgang Kraus, p.c., lectures). For Morgan and his colleagues kinship terminologies played a much more essential role. Summarizing his vision of kinship, Schneider 2004 [1972]: 258; underlining added; italics original) wrote:

Morgan's paradigm states that the mode of classification of kinsmen derives from the knowledge of how people are actually genetically or biologically related to each other. This knowledge in turn depends on their form of marriage [. . .] Thus, by taking one male and one female in the abstract and tracing their siblings, their parents, their offspring, and the parents, siblings,

offspring, and spouses of each of these, it is possible to create a genealogical grid, as it is called today; the particular classification of kin which particular people use can be mapped on this grid and compared with other classifications which other people use. . . . It seems obvious to Morgan that the mode of classification could be read directly from the kinship terminology . . . Hence kinship terminology was *the* key to the mode of classification and in fact, practically the only key, since the kinship terms meant (either only or primarily) specific relationships of blood or marriage.

Morgan (1997 [1871]) categorised the whole diversity of human families into a limited number (6) of ideal types and revealed two main principles of referring to relatives: *descriptive* and *classificatory*. In a purely descriptive system there is a clear distinction between the lineal and several collateral lines,⁹ i.e., the terms in such a system describe how a certain kin is related to the Ego. Ideally, such a system has an individual term for each type of relative: paternal/maternal aunt; parallel/cross, paternal/maternal cousin, etc. (compare, for example, the relatively elaborate kinship terminology of Turkish, Latin, Modern Danish and, probably, Old English; see also Schwimmer 1996–2001).

Purely classificatory systems merge different relatives into a small number of categories. Ideally, they only distinguish the generation and the gender of relatives; for example, in the actual Hawaiian kinship terminology, all relatives of the Ego's generation are referred to as his/her brothers and sisters, all uncles and aunts as his/her mothers and fathers, the younger generation as his/her sons and daughters (see also Schwimmer 1996–2001). All other types of kinship terminologies are located between these two opposite poles.

Classificatory kinship terminologies, in Morgan's opinion, reflected the "savage" stage of social development (corresponding to primeval promiscuity, see 1.1) when "primitive" people could differentiate each other only by age and sex. Accordingly, the emergence of mixed

9 Lineal relatives are those who are born to the Ego or to whom he/she is born: (grand)parents, (grand)children, etc.. Collateral relatives are his/her siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins and so on.

kinship terminologies should be associated with the emergence of matriarchal and later patriarchal genealogical thinking. Purely descriptive systems should be a feature of civilized societies with bilateral descent.

2.2 The problem of classificatory kinship terminologies and kinship semantics

2.2.1. Morgan's assumption that classificatory kinship terminologies reflected the original state of affairs among ancient peoples was shared by Rivers (1907). However, the latter interpreted it in a different way. He supposed that classificatory kinship terms did not originally signify genealogical relationship but tribal (social) statuses.

Andrew Lang (1908) on the other hand, in an article titled "The origin of terms of human relationship",¹⁰ rejected Morgan's idea of primeval promiscuity altogether and assumed that classificatory kinship terminologies emerged rather late and were the result of semantic extensions of basic kinship terms. In contrast to Rivers, he stated that kinship terms usually evolved into tribal statuses but not vice versa. At the same time, he did not insist that all kinship terms denoted genealogical relationship from the onset: some of them might well be words of the basic vocabulary that had undergone a semantic shift:

The male and female mates could talk of '*our* little ones', '*our* young ones'; each male could call his mate or mates '*my* woman', or '*my* women'; the females could speak of '*my* man', or – if their men were singularly free from jealousy – '*my* men'; and a child could recognize such other children as were 'from the same womb', or 'nourished by the same milk' as himself; while his father (or, if he was not recognizable, the adult men of the little group), would be to the child 'the food bringer', 'the governor' (as among our youths), or the 'master', or what not (Lang 1908: 152).

¹⁰ I would like to express my special gratitude to Prof. Robert Parkin for scanning this rare article from the Bodleian Libraries for me.

Therefore, Lang hinted that the terms of human relationship can be subdivided into three major parts: words of basic vocabulary, kinship terms proper – which can be extended under certain circumstances – and terms indicating (social) status. Chronologically the first group was the earliest and the last group the latest.

2.2.2. Lang's hypothesis was later mentioned in Scheffler (1972), in the essay "Kinship semantics" that was written as a reflexive response to Schneider (1972). The methodological suggestions of this paper are actually elementary and self-evident for all philologists but, strangely, they are rarely used by them in their work on kinship terms.

First of all, a researcher should not expect a kinship term to be monosemic, not even synchronically (Scheffler 1972: 310ff.). In addition, one should be aware of the distinction between polysemy and metaphorical usage of terms. For example, in the case of German *Frau* 'woman' and 'wife', we deal with polysemy. Polysemy can be synchronic and diachronic (= semantic shift, cf. also Zalizniak 2008: 223ff.).¹¹

Metaphoric use, on the other hand, occurs when one calls a stranger *father*. Kinship terms tend to be popular as terms of address, even of non-relatives. However, there are certain instances that can hardly even be called metaphoric. Scheffler (1972: 318) gave an example of someone calling his daughter 'sis' or his wife 'mom'. In contrast to Scheffler, I doubt that in this case a person really means that his daughter is like a sister to him or that his wife is like his mother.¹² Such words can rather be compared to interjections, or filler words or modal or discourse particles and can be easily displaced with, e.g., *babe* or *dude* or any other similar item. One uses them in order to attract attention of the interlocutor.¹³

11 I have adopted Scheffler's considerations for linguistic purposes and added my own examples.

12 Schneider (1980 [1968]: 89) points out also that if a man calls his wife 'mother', she does not call him 'son' in return. In this case 'father' is an expectable reply. Thus the implication is 'father and 'mother of the family/ in the house'.

13 Benedicte Nielsen Whitehead suggests viewing it as an instance of grammaticalization.

Secondly, one should distinguish the etymology and the synchronic primary meaning of words. Thus it is obvious that etymologically Lat. *filius* and *filia* ('suckling' << $\sqrt{*d^heh_1(i)}$ 'suck', 'suckle', *LIV*²: 138) are not kinship terms proper; but their synchronic primary meanings in Latin are 'son' and 'daughter'. Similarly, the etymology of the Slavic word *otrokъ* 'child, servant' (like Lat. *infāns*) is 'someone who cannot/may not speak', but by its synchronic primary meaning, for example, in Slovenian it is an unmarked word for child. Against this background, the problem of PIE **suH-nus/suH_ius* ('(who has been) born' (< abstr. 'birth' ?) <<< $\sqrt{*seuH}$ 'to give birth', cf. *NIL*, and Pinault, in print) turns out to be a pseudo-problem. Keeping in mind everything that has been said in the first section, it is unsurprising that sons are referred to as being "born" from a woman and not only "begotten" by a man, even in a society with patrilineal descent. But those who still consider it problematic can be consoled by the fact that the primary meaning of these words in Late PIE was already 'son' while 'born' was merely an etymology, which was apparently no longer transparent for speakers of Late PIE.

2.3 Connotations. Multifunctional terms

Finally, Scheffler (1972: 316–18) makes a distinction between metaphoric extension and connotative meaning. I assume that the linguistic notion of "connotations" might correspond to the notion in symbolic anthropology of "symbols and meanings", i.e., implications specific for a certain culture and/or for a certain epoch (Schneider 2004 [1972]: 261–2 with references). Due to this mental substance words attain their unique image. Such notions as '(adult) man/woman', 'boy' and 'girl' are known to (almost) all people on the planet as categories only. In different cultures (and even in the same culture at a different time) implications will be different. Thus a 15-year-old girl is a child to us, but in Ancient Greece or Medieval Europe she could be a matron. Connotations (= "symbols and meanings of a culture") present an element of surprise in the structure of a social term and are hardly predictable for any structural or componential semantic analyses. Yet their influence is decisive.

This point was discussed in Schneider (1984). At the beginning of his book, he placed two descriptions of an ethnic group on the island of Yap in the West Caroline Islands in Micronesia that he had studied during his field research. The first one (*ibid.*: 11–19) is a typical ethnographic description that one can also find in his earlier publications (Schneider 1953, 1962). In the second one, the terms that are specific to the Yapese culture were applied (Schneider 1984: 21–34). Both descriptions and their discussion take up many pages. That is why only a few of the most vivid points can be mentioned in this paper.

From the perspective of classical kinship studies, it would appear that the Yapese people have “a system of double descent (see Schneider 1962 and 1.2.2. above) with a dominant, localized, landholding, highly multifunctional, exogamous patrilineal lineage and a dispersed, exogamous, minimally functional matrilineal clan” (Schneider 1984: 17). However, Schneider argues that it is wrong to view these two units, which are referred to in Yapese as *tabinau* and *genung* respectively, (primarily) as extended families or clans (*ibid.* esp. 67–92).

Even though Schneider is overtly skeptical about linguistic analyses of terms denoting relatives and social institutions (*ibid.*: 43ff.), he often touches upon essential linguistic questions. Thus, he states that “between the fieldwork and the monograph falls the shadow of translation” (*ibid.*: 3). Ethnographers should not immediately translate or gloss social terms of the local language. At first one should try to perceive all its meanings and implications. For example, why should one translate *tabinau* as a patrilineal extended family when it has a lot of other functions: economic (growing plants, building houses), political (owning land, ruling the community) and religious (cult of dead ancestors) ones? It might as well be translated as a ‘farm’, ‘village’ or ‘church’. The etymology of the word is handy in this case: *tabinau* is derived from *binau* ‘land’ and thus means ‘the people of the land’ (Schneider 1953: 216). Therefore, it seems that cohabitation is the leading unmarked notion on which the term is based (cf. also Sahlins 2013): “the people belong to the land, the land does not belong to the people” (Schneider 1984: 24).

Another pair of curious terms is *citamangen* and *fak*. The former is usually a person's father, father's brothers, or father's male patriparallel cousins. However, there is only ever one *citamangen*. A *fak* is a *citamangen*'s child (e.g., 'son' or 'daughter'; gender irrelevant). "However, not all *citamangen* are father, father's brother, or father's male patriparallel cousins. Similarly, it is not only the children of father, father's brother, or father's male patriparallel cousins that are *fak*" (*ibid.*: 12). This set-up can be compared to levirate. If the Ego's father dies, his mother can stay in the *tabinau* as a wife of the eldest surviving sibling or cousin (Schneider 1962: 218ff.). The relationship between the two is characterized by authority, superiority and independence on the part of the *citamangen* and obedience, inferiority and dependence on the part of a *fak*. In case of improper behavior the *citamangen* can terminate *fak*'s membership in *tabinau* (*ibid.*: 17f.).

Curiously,

if a *tabinau* is composed of two or more brothers and their wives and children, then normally each child refers to his own mother's husband as *citamangen* whether he is head of the *tabinau* or not. But where relations outside the *tabinau* occur then the head of the *tabinau* acts as *citamangen* for all the children (*ibid.*: 13).

Using terms of classical anthropology, one could classify such a relationship as *social kinship*, as Schneider (1962: 6) himself did at first. But as soon as an indigenous person gives further detail, the terms turn out to be even more complex (*ibid.*: 30):

A mother's husband and her child (among many others) are *citamangen* and *fak* respectively to each other. But this terminology may be reversed when the mother's husband is old, relatively helpless and dependent on his wife's son. Then the mother's husband may call the wife's son *citamangen* or *tam* (the stem of the longer word). And so too he will call his wife's daughter *citiningen* or *tin* (the stem), for these terms express the asymmetrical dependency relationship. Forms of

dress reiterate these signs. A small boy at first wears no covering. Then he wears a single bit of loincloth. Later he adds two different colored pieces, still later he adds a long swath of hibiscus fiber tucked in fore and aft, with a long loop hanging between his knees, sometimes dyed red or left in its natural yellowish-white color. But as a man gets old and no longer fishes, his loincloth changes accordingly so that an old man wears but a single meager cloth, if that, and the Yapese say, "You see, he is like a child." He is, for he is weak and dependent and needs care just as a child does: he has become *fak* to the child who was *fak* to him.

As an Indo-Europeanist I would compare the Yapese *citamangen* to the Latin notion *pater familias* and *fak* to the Greek word *παῖς* (<< **paǵ-* 'small') – although I doubt that there is a one-to-one correspondence between these notions. The latter (*παῖς*) is an age-grade 'child' ('boy' or 'girl'), a kinship term ('son' or 'daughter') and a designation of a slave or servant simultaneously, thus 'a little one' in terms of age and body size, and 'a little one (= dependent, inferior, etc.)' in social hierarchy. It is notable that in order to acquire a kinship meaning the Greek word needs a possessive pronoun or a noun in the genitive (someone's child = someone's son/daughter); the same is true for some 'kinship' terms in Yapese (for example, *fak-ag* means 'my *fak* (= my son / daughter, my ward, etc.)', *citamang-og* 'my *citamangen* (= my father, a man in charge of me, etc.)', *citining-og* 'my *citiningen* (my mother, a woman in charge of me, etc.)', -*ag/-og* being the first person suffix, cf. Schneider 1953: 219). However, *fak* has an even broader meaning than *παῖς*: It can also refer to animate possessions like domestic animals (Schneider 1984: 31). At this point one should be cautious because possession in Yapese does not correspond to the English notion of ownership. It means rather that a certain animate being is associated with another, is near him/her (*ibid.*: 29). Thus the *fak* is not the *citamangen's* property. The basic meaning of *fak* at least synchronically is most likely to be close to the German adjective *angehörig*, which can be substantivized and used to refer to relatives.

The term *citiningen* mentioned in the quotation above is the feminine counterpart of *citamangen*. This word is as multifunctional as the 'father' term. Through *citiningen* the child is connected to a *genung*, an allegedly matrilineal clan (see above). In contrast to a *tabinaw*, which even in Schneider's earlier publications (1962: 6) is never viewed as a "group related by biological ties", *genung* is a 'relationship through a common "belly"' (Schneider 1984: 24ff.). Members of this group are seen as originating from a common ancestress, *nik*. However, this matrilineal lineage is only partially biological and mostly fictional because *nik* is not a human being but a spirit, an animal, or a plant (*ibid.*: 79–92). A *citiningen* can be the mother. If the mother is dead or has divorced the *citamangen*, this title can be transmitted to his new wife, sister, or another female relative (Schneider 1953: 219ff.; 1984: 62ff). Therefore, *citiningen* is basically the woman who is responsible for the child at a certain moment.

These and other examples in Schneider (1984) indicate a multifunctional character of social terms and obviously the customs they denote (p. 183). A kinship meaning is not primary or dominant here and often cannot be derived from the etymology of the word either.

Schneider's observations are partially confirmed by linguistic typology, more specifically the research project of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM, e.g., Goddard & Wierzbicka 1994, 2014; Wierzbicka 1996). In her recent article, Wierzbicka (2016) argues that the notions 'father' and 'mother' (also 'child', 'husband' and 'wife') can be viewed as "universally lexicalised meanings" (= "lexical universals"),¹⁴ while all other kinship notions common to European and American mentality ('son' and 'daughter', 'brother' and 'sister' and even cover terms such as 'sibling' and 'parent') have strong culturally specific implications.

14 This approach of linguistic typology distinguishes semantic primes or primitives (the smallest elements of meaning which cannot be further decomposed) and semantic universals or molecules (complex meanings presenting, however, universals of human experience) (Wierzbicka 1996; Goddard 2001: 1191ff.; Wierzbicka 2016: 410).

I hope that the methods and findings of social anthropology will also be used in historical linguistics and can help us to come to a better understanding of IE and especially PIE kinship terminology.

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