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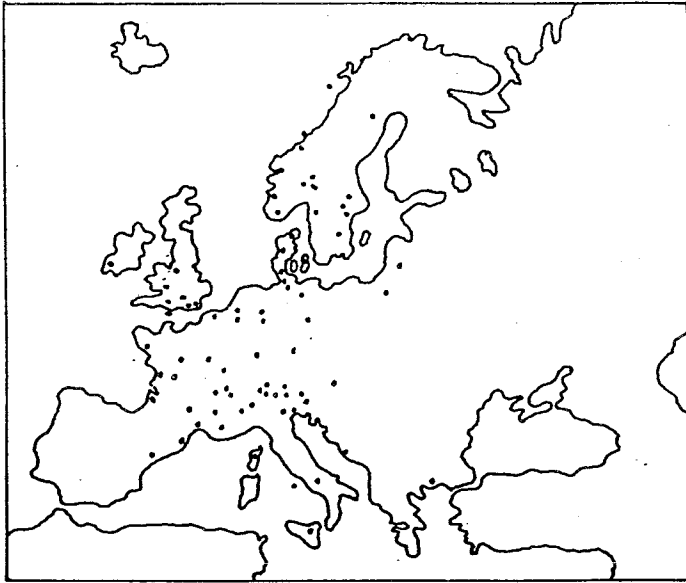
Abstract of a paper scheduled for presentation at the *Second Odonatological Symposium of the Alps-Adriatic Regional Community, Vienna, July 14-18, 1996*

**SNAKE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN "DRAGONFLY"
FOLK APPELLATIONS: DISTRIBUTIONAL PATTERN
REFLECTING THE URNFIELD CULTURE EXPANSION
DURING THE FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.?**

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The folk expressions for "dragonfly" represent one of the standard items in lexical lists and in dialectological vocabularies. Estimated roughly, some 2500 authentic appellations were so far evidenced in various European languages. These include over 100 expressions, in which any kind of an association between the dragonfly and the snake is expressed. Some examples are: in Breton ("adoue èr", "marc'h aer", "nadoz-aer"), Catalan (e.g. "aspie dimonis", "el kabal de ser[sp]"), Cornwall/Gaelic (= Celtic) ("nademargh", "tarbh-nathrach"), Croat ("kačin pastir", "zmijak", "zmijin stric"), Czech (e.g. "hadi hlava"), English (UK) (e.g. "adderbolt", "flying asp"), French, incl. Occitan (e.g. "cap dé sèr", "éspéouyo-sèr", "piu d'sarpan"), German (e.g. "Natterhalter", "Natterschwester", "Schlangenhüter"; in Lausitz also "Uttrop"), Hungarian ("kígyó pásztor", "kígyó őrző"), Italian ("pyoéy d're serp"), Ladin ("špádamadrák"), Norwegian (e.g. "bror til hoggormen", "ormesting"), Slovene ("kačji hlapec", "kačji pastir", "modrasov hlapec"), Polish (e.g. "vazoguova") and in Welsh ("gwaell y neidr", "gwas y neidr"). — The geographic range of this nomenclature is centred upon central Europe, but the well defined outer borders of the area run as follows: In the East: from the SE border of Slovenia, over W Croatia, westernmost Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia, include most of the German area, up to the Baltic and to Norway. In the West: from Slovenia and Friuli, across N Italy (Piedmont) to S France. The southern branch runs from the Provence, to the Mediterranean and on to Languedoc and Catalonia. The northern part of the fork stretches from W Switzerland, over Savoy and westward to the Limousin. Brittany (in France) and Cornwall, Wales and Anglia (in Britain) form a separate unit. Outside this territory such appellations appear unknown. — Like often is the case in various ethnographic features and folk superstitions, the distribution of the dragonfly/snake appellations is not restricted to a certain language or a language group. Rather, it seems to reflect a much older cultural tradition, prevailing in this area before the present languages have evolved. The distribution patterns fit almost perfectly with those of the Urnfield cultures, as formed in the first millennium B.C., after the expansion from their original centre in Lausitz, in E Germany. The Catalan occurrence is supported by an Urnfield centre in Catalonia. — Ethnographically, the Urnfield cultures were recently attributed to the ancient Venets. It is amazing, therefore, the distribution of dragonfly/snake folk names corresponds generally very well also with the area, where a "Venetic element" appears preserved in numerous topographic names (cf. J. Šavli et al., 1996, *Veneti, first builders of European community*, Edit. Veneti, Vienna).



*Veneter-Namen
in Europa, ihr
Verbreitungsgebiet
deckt sich mit
dem Siedlungs-
raum der Veneter
oder Wenden
nach dem
12. Jh. v. Chr.*