WORDS FOR 'DANDELION' IN ROMANCE, GERMANIC, SLAVIC AND BALTIC LANGUAGES[1]

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European dialectal denominations of 'dandelion', an herbaceous plant of the Compositae family, widespread in Europe and very well known for its multiple uses and various properties, stand out for their number and variety[2]. Despite the complexity of the European denominative context, it can be stated that a considerable part of the rich repertoire of the dandelion's dialectal designations springs from the morphological and organoleptic properties of the plant, including the edibility of its leaves, used in numerous areas in Europe as salad during springtime, as well as other traits more closely tied to the traditional beliefs and knowledge related to the small plant.

Before moving on to examine the more significant names, a few general aspects regarding the dandelion's designations should be discussed. In the first place, because the plant takes on very diverse morphological characteristics during its life cycle, in some areas it is known by different names associated with the stages of development. Some speakers are even convinced that the stages of development cannot be traced back to a single type of plant but reflect their belonging to different species. In the second place, the multiplication of the names for dandelion was facilitated by the different uses – culinary, officinal, in children's games and magic – of the various parts of the plant, such as the roots, leaves, flower, fruit, stem etc. calling the speakers attention to one aspect or another, depending on local customs or traditions. Finally, it should be remembered that even in the dandelion's designations a feature typical of popular plant studies significantly emerges, or rather, the extension of a name to different plants belonging to the same species as well as to others of a different type.

[1] This article is the result of a preliminary overview of the European nouns for 'dandelion' for the *Atlas Linguarum Europae* project and it is based on the list of terms provided by the respective departments or national synthesis.

[2] Dandelion is a spontaneous flower growing in the entire North hemisphere unto the alpine area. It is a perennial herbaceous plant with a 12–20 cm long tap root. From this stem, in early spring, arise long sharp leafs, with crenelated triangular lobes, that form a rosette on the ground; from its middle afterwards the cylindrical stems grow, which are empty on the inside. The flowers are golden-yellow, and the fruit have a "small umbrella" – a flock of seed heads – easily carried away by the wind. It produces flowers from April until October. The root is harvested in autumn, in September-November, and the aerial part in spring, before or during the formation of the flower heads. The plant stem contains a milky liquid.

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As already mentioned, the dandelion plant is used in diverse areas of folk tradition. First of all, dandelion leaves are edible, being used in salads, and they are also edible for some animals. The dandelion is also considered a medicinal plant appreciated for its therapeutic properties: even today it is said that it cleans the organism, it stimulates liver function and it cures diabetes; dandelion roots are considered a natural remedy for various disorders due to its effect on the human body: depurative, sudorific, diuretic, stimulatory; it is also used as a cosmetic treatment to brighten the face. Furthermore, the cheery yellow flowers and airy white puffs of dandelion seed heads have lent themselves to many uses in magic and folklore over the centuries, mostly in the areas of divination, making wishes, and bringing good luck. For example, in certain beliefs, it is said that the number of seeds left after one blow reveals how many years a young person has to wait until marrying or the number of children a girl will have or the numbers of years of life left to live. In another popular tradition, it is said that those who pick the dandelion will wet their bed (due to its presumed diuretic qualities)[3]. Finally, the dandelion has been used in many children's games. Based on popular beliefs rooted in folk culture from various European regions, it can, then, be hypothesized that because of its polymorphism, the dandelion was attributed with magical and religious powers, traces of which are still found in some denominations.

The scientific name of the dandelion (*Taraxacum*) most likely comes from the Greek word *tarassein*, meaning 'to disturb' or 'to change', with reference to its depurative effect, but it is possible that it comes from the Latinised version of the Arabic *ṭaraḫšaqūn* 'wild chicory', from the Persian *talḫ čakok* 'bitter plant'. Other terms of scholarly tradition are *dens leonis* 'lion's tooth', *rostrum porcinum*, which gave origin to perhaps the most widespread tradition, and *caput monaci*, found in the medieval herbaria. In European languages dandelion has more than 500 names and in this study, limited to Romance, Germanic, Slavic and Baltic languages, we have tried to identify the most relevant linguistic and extra-linguistic motivations underlying the names of the dandelion[4].

1. THE ASPECT OF THE PLANT

With regard to the aspect of the plant, each particular part has been taken into account, so we have arranged the various lexical types in motivational groups, considering the different parts of the dandelion that probably inspired the various denominations: the stem's juice, the stalk, the leaf, the flower, the fruit.

[3] For the diverse fortune telling powers of the dandelion in Gallo. Roman or German, see respectively Rolland (1890–1914) and HDA.

[4] Dialectal forms used in the text are presented in the IPA phonetic transcription system if placed in square parenthesis or in graphic orthography according to the ALE norms when indicated in italics.

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1.1. The stem’s juice

The fact that the plant stem contains a milky liquid has allowed for the development of names based on the word for *milk* and, by extension, for *butter* and *cream*, which emphasises the idea of ‘fat’, ‘fatness’, ‘greasy’. In addition, because dandelion leaves are edible and are used in salads, an association has arisen between this plant and food terminology, like ‘bacon’ and ‘lard’.

The widest-spread form in the Slavic and Baltic languages is a derived or compound word from the word for *milk*. This form is almost universal in the Baltic languages: it covers the entire network of Latvian (36 places) and it is found in Lithuanian in 41 places (out of 42)[5]. With regard to Slavic languages, a similar situation occurs in Polish, where the forms derived from *milk* occur in 36 places (out of 38)[6]. We add here the two places surveyed for Sorbian in East Germany with the forms [mlats] and [mlu̯tʃ’]. This type also occurs in all Eastern Slavic languages: in Belorussian (13 places out of 29), Ukrainian (21 places out of 68), and Russian (2 places out of 78)[7]. It is well represented in South Slavic languages: in Bulgarian (14 places out of 32), Serbian and Croatian (8 places out of 34), Macedonian (2 places of the 5 where answers were noted to the question on *pissenlit* ‘dandelion’)[8]. It is less attested in central Slavic languages: Czech (6 places out of 12), Slovenian (3 places out of 7), Slovak (1 place out of 12)[9]. Gathering the above figures, we notice that the forms originating from the word *milk* – derived and compound – cover the entire territory of the Baltic countries and more than a third of the territory where Slavic languages are spoken.

Regarding the Romance languages, derived forms from Latin *lacte* appear more frequently in some marginal areas such as Picard (*lacheron*), Catalan ([ʎəts'o]), Spanish (*lechechino*, *lechecilla*, *lecharuela*) and Occitan (*lachiron*), with sporadic claims in Franco-Provençal in France ([letʃ'ɔ̃]) and in Switzerland ([leitəs'ɔ̃])[10], in some Italian dialects in North Italy and in Corsica (*latsol*, *lattarella*) and in Rhaeto-Romance ([leitəs'ɔ̃]).

In Germanic languages, except for the Danish, where *(fandens) mælkebøtte* ‘damn milky bucket’ is the most prevalent type, we find sporadic compound forms

[5] See Latvian *pienene*, *pienine*, *piene*, *pienele*, *pieninīca* and Lithuanian *piẽnė, pienė̃, piẽnis, pienỹs*.

[6] See Polish *mleczak* and *mleczaj*.

[7] Of the numerous registered forms and variants, we mention here the dial. Ukrainian. *moloč*, the dial. Belorussian *maločnik*, the Russian *moloĉaj*.

[8] Of the numerous registered forms and variants, we mention the Bulgarian *mleč*, the Serbian and Croatian *mliječ* and derived forms, the Macedonian *plečka*.

[9] See the Slovenian *mleč*, the Czech *mlíč* and the Slovak *mlieč*. By association with curdy milk, as a viscous liquid, by semantic transfer we can explain the Slovak term *slimák* ‘slime’.

[10] Here also [laetr'ɔ̃ bδã] from the Latin *lactarius +blank.*

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like *milchdistel* ‘milk+thistle’ in Austria (1 place), Germany (3 places) and Swedish (*mjölktistel*: 3 places), *milchbüshel* ‘milk-bush’ in Austria (4 places) and Germany (*milchbüshe(en)*: 2 places), *milchblättchen* ‘milk-leaves’ in Austria (3 places). The Serbian and Croatian compound form *mlèčna trava* ‘milky grass’ belongs to this group as does the Spanish *yerba letrera* and *jerba lechera* ‘milky grass’. Instead, compounds like ‘pig’s milk’ characterize Latvian (with 16 places)[11] and Lithuanian (with 17 places) setting it apart from the other European languages[12].

In this domain we also include some names derived from words referring to dairy products like *butter* or *cream*. The first type is represented by the Slavic forms attested in Serbian and Croatian (*maslačak*, *slačak*), where it is very common (7 places), and sometimes in Slovak (*måsliak*); the second one occurs in Czech *smetamka*. We also add here the Bulgarian compound *mayno kokače* ‘greasy little bone’.

Compounds with ‘butter’ are also common in some Germanic languages such as German (*butterblume* ‘butter flower’ and *butterdistel* ‘butter thistle’) and especially Swedish (*smörblomma*, *smörgubbe*), where they represent a very common type (12 places) in Sweden and in the Swedish-language area of Finland. The type *butterdistel* also occurs in a German speaking part of Romania.

In the same domain we include the compound words referring to bacon and lard, such as German *speckblume* ‘bacon flower’ and *schmalzblume* ‘lard flower’ which also refer to some children’s games as mentioned in Marzell (1943–1972)[13].

1.2. The stalk

From the physical features of the stalk come forms like the German (in Austria) *röhrel* ‘little pipe’, the North Italian [bj'ɔdola] ‘little cane’[14], the Friulan type [t'ale], from Latin *thallus* ‘stalk’ (REW 8695, REW-F), the South Italian [j'unku][15] ‘reed, rush’ and the Swedish *slat-tistle* ‘smooth thistle’ because the stem has no thorns. The Slovenian *regrat* is borrowed from the Bavarian dialect of German, while the Slovenian *regat*, attested as *reàrl*, is a loan from the German *röhrlein* (German dial. *rearle*) ‘little pipe’.

[11] Cfr. Latvian *cūkpiene* and Lithuanian *kiaũliapiene*.

[12] A similar isolated form is the Ukrainian dial. *psjače moloko* ‘dog’s milk’. For these expressions concerning animals see below 4.1.

[13] “Die Kindern halten die Blume wohl auch an den Hals, um am wiederschein ihrer gelben Farbe zu sehen, wieviel Speck ein jeder hat. Die Kindern halten die gelben Blüten unter das Kinn und sehen ob sie ‘viel Schmalz’ haben” (Marzell 1943–1972: IV, 612).

[14] From Latin *buda* (REW 1371) + suffix *-ola*.

[15] From Latin *juncus* ‘reed, rush’ (REW 4619).

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1.3. The leaf

1.3.1. ‘frizzy’

Dealing with the names that may be related to the features of the leaf, we find a few Romance names suggesting the idea of ‘frizzy’ such as the French [krep'øta] and the South Italian [kresp'œmme], both derived forms from the Latin *crĭspus* ‘frizzy’.

1.3.2. ‘bitter’

The South Italian type [mar'ɛlla], a derived form from the Latin *amarum* ‘bitter’ (REW 406) and the Spanish *achicoria amarga* ‘bitter chicory’ are linked to the edibility of the leaves and their bitter taste.

1.3.3. Comparisons with other plants with same leaf

Many nouns come from comparisons with other plants with similar leaves like ‘chicory’, ‘radicchio’, lettuce’, and ‘thistle’. The simple type ‘chicory’ or its derived forms is the widest-spread in Italian ([tʃi'korja]/[tʃikori'one]) and Sardinian dialects. It is fairly widespread in Occitan in Italy ([tʃi'korja]/[tʃikori'one]), in Franco Provençal in France and in the French-speaking part of Belgium ([ʃikor'e]) and also recorded in Catalan ([tʃik'ɔ̆ə]), Rhaeto-Romance in Switzerland (*zicorgia*) and Rumanian (*cicoare*). In Italy, besides simple and derived nouns, we found numerous compound forms like the Sardinian [tʃi'korja a'rɛsta] and [tʃik'orja b'urda], the South Italian [tʃik'ɔrja azin'ina], the North Italian [tʃik'orja 'matta] and [tʃik'orja salv'adiga], the Italian in Switzerland [tʃik'ɔrja di pra:j], which contain adjectives used in these areas to differentiate wild plants from cultivated plants[16]. In Spanish we also found compound names like *achicoria silvestre* ‘wild chicory’. Although nouns relating to ‘chicory’ seem to be typically Romance forms, we must mention some sporadic similar items in the West Germanic domain such as the German in Austria *zichorei*, the Dutch *cichoreiblœm*, the German (in Switzerland) *zichorienblume*.

In Italian dialectal forms occur which come from the Late Latin *radiculum* ‘radicchio, chicory’, such as [rad'itju] (in Corse) and [ra'dikkjo], as well as the compound forms ‘wild radicchio’, such as [rad'etʃo m'ato], [rad'icco salv'atiho], [raditʃ'uɳ[17] sarv'ɛgu]. Another series of Italian nouns, like [rad'itʃa], [radicc' ɛlla] ‘small root’, [rad'itʃja sarv'adga] ‘small wild root’, comes from the Latin *radicula* ‘small root’ (REW 6996).

[16] It must be said that in North Italian dialects also the suffix *-one*, present in [tʃikori'one], can mean ‘wild’ used in reference to plants.

[17] The last one is a derived form with the suffix *-one* that means ‘wild’.

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The type ‘lettuce’, from the Latin *lactuca* (REW 4833), is very widespread in Rumanian (*lăptucă*: 12 points), and also occurs occasionally in Occitan ([lit'ydza]: 2 points).

Finally, we have forms corresponding to ‘thistle’ in English, and in the Romance domain, especially in Central and South Italy, with derived forms (from Latin *carduus*) like [kard'eḍḍa], [kard'iʎʎu], [kard'onə], [kardunʧ'illə] and compound forms like [kard'eḍḍa serv'adzdza], [kard'uni kr'esti] ‘small wild thistle’, and in Catalan *carroncha*.

1.3.4. Culinary use

Since dandelion leafs are edible, and especially used in salads, the presence of the term ‘salad’ is also explainable, like the simple French form [sal'ad] and compound forms with ‘wild’, like the North Italian [sal'ata salv'adiga] and [sal'ata di pr'ai] ‘wild salad’[18].

1.4. The flower

1.4.1. The color

In reference to the yellow colour of the blossoming dandelion, a series of Germanic and Slavic derived and compound terms have been created. In particular, we note that compounds with ‘yellow’ are particularly common in the Germanic languages of northern Europe, i.e. in Norwegian (*gulblome*, *gulblomster*, *gulgut*, *gullboste*) and in Swedish (*gulblomma*/*gulablomma*/*storgulblomma*, *gulborste* ‘yellow brush’, *gulgubbe* ‘yellow little lump’), while they appear sporadically in some East Slavic languages such as Bulgarian *žălturče*, Serbian *žućenica*, Ukrainian dial. *žovtoj kvitja* ‘flower + yellow’, *žovta korol’ka* ‘yellow crown’ and *žovta kosycja* ‘yellow plait’ that can be explained by the fact that young girls interlaced dandelions in their hair. In Romance languages only the Rumanian *floare galbenă* (documented near Ukraina) ‘yellow flower’ and the Spanish *achicoria amarillia* ‘yellow chicory’ are recorded.

In relation to the brightening effect the dandelion colour produces, we have such names as the Bulgarian *lampički* (diminutive derivation from *lampa* ‘lamp’, in the plural) ‘little lamps’, the Slovak *lámpavirág*, and the Croatian *lampuš* (< Hung. *Lampas* ‘lamp’). Because of the flowers’ yellow colour, some names for dandelion have been associated with gold. So we can explain compound forms like the Swedish *gullros* ‘gold rose’ (1 place), *gullbörst* ‘gold brush’ (8 places), *gullgubbe* ‘gold lump’ and we can notice that the direct or indirect motivation regarding the colour of the flower is most common in Swedish.

[18] Also the North Italian form [tadzejn'etu] ‘grass to be cut’ to be eaten as salad illustrates this custom.

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Finally in the Norwegian *solei* and in the Spanish *sol* ‘sun’ we find a semantic association with the sun.

1.4.2. The period of flowering

A significant number of nouns are based on the names for two months of the year: March, when the dandelion emerges and its leaves are more tender and sweet and therefore better for salads, and above all, May, the period when the plant is in blossom. With regard to March, the Bulgarian names *martenica* and *baba marta*, attested in the same place, Smolsko, also seem to echo some popular beliefs regarding the ‘old ladies’, chimerical and changing beings who, in the Balkans, explain the variable weather in the early days of this month. Regarding the month of May, we find some derived and compound names in West Slavic languages: the Polish *maj* and *majka*, the Czech *máječek*, the Slovak *majka*, the Ukrainian dial. *majka* and *majova čička* ‘May flower’. In the Germanic domain, especially in Austria and in Germany, compound forms like the German *maiblume*, *maibuschen* ‘bushes of may’, *maistök*, *mairöhrel* occur. In the Swedish *midsommarsblomma* ‘Midsummer’s flower’ we find a general reference to the period of flowering, while *buförsblomma* ‘removal flower’ refers to the “removing”, or rather bringing of cattle to summer pastures in spring times and *stadublomma* and *stadugubbe* mean ‘flower of the *stada*’ which comes three days before and three days after the summer solstice when all plant life was considered to be at a standstill. From the period of flowering or from the habitat of the plant come the Swedish types *kornblomma* ‘barley flower’, *bjuggfibla* and *sädestoppa* ‘grain flower’.

1.4.3. Flower’s behavior

Only in Norwegian and in Swedish we find nouns which refer to the fact that ‘flowers close at night’; in particular, in Norwegian *nattsvæve*, *nattsøve*, *kveldsvæve*, *kvelsøve*, *kveldsovn*, *kveldkippe*, *kveldkneppe* are attested, while in Swedish *nattsovare* means ‘night sleeper’. Instead, the Gallo-Roman [saramjez'u] means ‘close to the heat of noon’ and it is isolated in the Romance domain.

A series of Occitan (in Italy), North Italian and German terms refers to the fact that the flower turns to the sun. These forms are the North Italian [viras'ul] ‘turn to the sun’ and [miras'u] ‘look at the sun’, the Occitan [virasulɛj] ‘turn to the sun’, the German *sonnenwurm*, as well as *sonnenwirbel* ‘sun + turn’ attested in Germany and in Switzerland.

1.4.4. Insects’ flower

Being a flower often visited by bees led to the creation of Germanic designations like the Danish *biblomme*, the German (in Luxembourg) [b'æəʃtak] and the Norwegian *humeblom*. Instead, in Swedish forms appear like *kusblomma* ‘insect flower’, *lusros* ‘louse rose’ and *busros* ‘insect rose’ that refer to the fact that the dandelion is frequently visited by small insects.

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1.5. The fruit

A few Russian diminutives like *puŝok*, *puŝoĉek* ‘little fluff’ refer to the fluffy aspect of the mature flower head, as we can also see in the Rumanian *pufuleț* ‘little fluff’. We include here some other terms derived from ‘cotton’ or other plants with similar ‘fluffy’ features, like the Bulgarian *bumbalce* ‘cotton’ (derived) and *papunka* ‘cotton’s capsule’, the South-Italian [βammatʃ' eɖɖa], a diminutive form of ‘cotton’, and the North Italian [stupj'õ] derived from *stoppa* ‘fluff’ (influenced by *soffione* ‘puffball’).

2. CHILDREN’S GAMES

According to folktales, the dandelion is often used for children’s play. Children not only blow on the seed heads, but also create straws, small trumpets or small pieces of jewellery like rings or necklaces by cutting and curling the stem.

Children’s games that involve blowing on the fluff from the dandelion have given rise to several nouns dealing with ‘to blow’[19]. In Russian and Belorussian, where the forms derived from *milk* are attested to a lower degree (see 1.1.), the dominant form comes from the radical *dut’* ‘to blow’, usually preceded by a prefix (*ad-*, *nad-*, *pad-*, *raz-*) and followed by the suffix *-čik*: the Russian *oduvanĉik*, *duvanĉik*, the Belorussian *aduvanĉik* and *naduvanĉik*. These names cover most of the Russian-language territory, being attested in 72 places (out of 78) and more than a third of Belorussia’s territory, being attested in 12 places (out of 29). This word is weakly attested in the other Eastern Slavic languages, Ukrainian, where it occurs in only 2 places, as a dialectal word: *oduvanĉyk* (one record), *naduvanĉik* (one record). In Germanic languages this type occurs with some items in Germany (*pusteblume* ‘blow flower’), while in Romance languages it seems to be unknown, with the exception of the standard Italian *soffione*, a derived form from *soffio* ‘blow’, and the South Italian dialectal [tʃʃ'utʃʃəmə m m'okkə] ‘blow in my mouth’[20]. Instead the Ukrainian *padyvolos* and the Czech *pleška* ‘bald, hairless’ are forms coming from words meaning ‘to fall off, to detach’ like the Croatian *lupež*, a derived form from the radical *lup-* ‘detach (decorticate, ripple)’. Regarding these nouns we can mention that Portuguese children also call the dandelion *o teu pai é careca* ‘your dad is bald’, due to a game in which the children blow on a dandelion: if it is left with no seeds, it means the other kid’s dad is bald.

A children’s activity that has left its mark on European denominations of the dandelion, for example the South Italian [pertʃakann'eɖɖa] ‘pierce cane’[21] and the

[19] Children enjoy blowing on the mature seed heads to send the achene flying on their feathery pappus and they are anxious to find this plant in order to spread its seed head in one breath or more.

[20] From Latin *sufflare* ‘to blow’ (REW 8430) + personal pronoun *mi* + ‘in mouth’.

[21] From Latin *pertusiare* ‘pierce’ + ‘cane’.

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Swedish *pipblomma* ‘pipe flower’, involves making a sort of trumpet from the stem. Evidence of this tradition can be found in France (Rolland 1896: VII, 191) and in Italy where these rudimental musical instruments are made while chanting a propitious verse (Cugno 2012).

The stem is also used in children’s games to make rings or chains, and some terms refer to this aspect. They are the Croatian *prstenak* ‘little ring’, the Serbian *verige* ‘chain’ and derived forms like the Croatian *lancek* from *lanec* ‘chain’. The Slovenian form *vergart* is probably explained by contamination with *verige* ‘chain’. Regarding the Germanic domain, we mention the widespread Norwegian forms *lekkjeblom* (with numerous phonetic variants), the Dutch *kettenbloem* ‘chain flower’, and the German *kettenstrauch* ‘chaine shrub’, *kettenbusch* ‘chaine bush’, *kettenblume* (in Switzerland). Among Romance languages the Rumanian *inelar*, from *inel* ‘ring’, and the Rhaeto-Romance *flour cadagna*/*flur chadaina* ‘flower chain’ should be mentioned.

3. POPULAR BELIEFS

3.1. Effects of the dandelion on the human body

In Italy, France and Germany children are usually told that whoever picks a dandelion will wet their bed that night and this superstition is probably tied to the plant’s well known diuretic property[22]. So the effect the dandelion has on the bladder and bowels gave rise to compound forms like ‘to piss in bed’ in Gallo-Roman, the widespread French [pisã'li][23] and the Belgian forms [pisã'li], [piʃol'ɛ] and only one record in Switzerland ([piʃ ã je:]). Within the Romance domain we find the Spanish *meacamas* and *churracamas* ‘piss in bed’ and the Central Italian [piʃʃal'lɛttə], but the much more common noun in various Italian dialects is [piʃʃak'ane] which means ‘dog pisses’, according to one popular explanation because dandelions are found on roadsides. We also find the type ‘to piss in bed’ (*bettseichen*) in the German speaking area of France and in a few localities in Germany and in Luxembourg, then in English (*pissabed(s*)) and in Dutch (*pissebedde*, *beddepisser*). In the Germanic domain compound forms meaning ‘piss flower’ also occur like the Dutch *zeikbloem* and *pisbloem*, the German *miegenblume* and *seichblum*, and the Swedish *pissros*. By extension, in France we also find compound forms such as ‘to shit in bed’, like the French *chie-en-lit* and the Occitan *cago-lie*, a type that also occurs in Germany (*bettscheisser*) and in the German speaking area of France.

[22] At the same time, however, in a German text from 1693, the dandelion was indicated, as a decoction to take morning and evening, as a remedy for nighttime urine incontinence (perhaps for its yellow colour according to the principle *similia similibus*) (Schröder, *Apotheke*, in HDA).

[23] In French *pissenlit* is the official name of dandelion.

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Under this heading we also include names referring to the effect the fluff may have on humans, causing blindness or deafness (HDA): the Italian [bruza'ɔtʃo] is an imperative compound meaning 'burn eye', the Occitan *mal d'els* means 'eyes hurt', the Ukrainian *slipak* means 'blind' and the compound *kurača slipata* means 'the hens blindness/moon blindness' while the Bulgarian *gluharče* (*glušarče*, *gluvarniče*) and the Macedonian *gluvarče* are derived forms from the adjective 'deaf'[24].

3.2. Medicinal uses

There is much evidence related to the dandelion's use in folk medicine. For example, as was previously noted, in German areas it was prescribed for nighttime enuresis or as an amulet against eye disease and its milky juice was used to treat warts if applied on the third day of the waning moon (HDA). Some different forms sporadically present in Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Norwegian and Rumanian suggest medicinal uses of the dandelion, in particular to fight leprosy, scabies and other skin diseases. They are the Spanish *jerba sana* 'healthy grass', the South Italian [skatʃʃalj' ɛpri] 'drive away leprosy', the Swedish *skabbros* 'flower of scabies', the Norwegian *skabb*, *skobbe*, *skabber* 'scabies', *vorteblomst* and *skurvblomst(er)* 'wart flower' and the Rumanian compound *kur găină* which means a type of 'skin disease'.

In Danish, in German and in Frisian we find that the most frequent names are derived from the use of the dandelion as a remedy against lice. They are the Danish compound *lopperose*, *loppeblomst*, the North Frisian *liis-blömk* and the German *lūsblōme* (4 places) 'lice flower', and Danish *loppeurt* 'lice grass'.

3.3. Oracle from the seed

As evinced from superstitions passed down from folk tradition, there are numerous areas which believe the dandelion pappus could be used to foretell the future: these predictions dealt with how long you would live, or love and marriage, and even life after death[25]. Many of the dandelion's denominations in this regard refer to people's love life. Young lovers relied on the plant to predict the outcome of their hopes and loves: they blew on the pappi, and if all the achenes blew away, their dreams would come true. Hence the Portuguese forms [ɐ̃mor duz 'mãiʃ] 'men's love' and [ʒu'izu duz 'ɔmiʃ] 'judgment of men' can be related to this belief and we encounter similar forms in Swedish *herdekärlek* and *pojk-kärlek* 'boy's

[24] It should also be noted that in this case there is also evidence of therapeutic uses of the dandelion against eye diseases: the roots gathered at dawn and put in a small bag were used as a charm against eye problems (HDA). Instead, in Serbian folk medicine the juice extracted from the roots was used for earaches (Theissen 2005).

[25] See HDA and Rolland (1890–1914).

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love’. Instead, the Dutch *klokkebloem* ‘bell flower’ probably refers to another type of oracle which held that the number of seeds left tell the time. This kind of oracle is present in Germany, in England and in Romance countries (HDA; Rolland 1890–1914).

4. ANIMALS

There are many names for the dandelion which refer to animals or parts of them, such as the muzzle or tail, often accounted for or used as a metaphor by the speakers to associate physical characteristics of the plant with certain animals or with the fact that some animals eat, like human beings, the leaves. Alinei (1984) believes, on the other hand, that the theriomorphic representation of plants, just like those of other particularly influential aspects on human life such as illnesses and atmospheric phenomena, may constitute a sign of an extremely ancient cultural period, dating back to totemism, when animals were perceived as magical beings, which could become evil and therefore harm man. And, in effect, a totemic representation of the plant can still be recognized in some kinship names attested in South Italian dialects (see 5.). In the languages considered here, the animals that appear in the dandelion’s designations are the pig, lion, horse, dog, cow, rooster, hen, scorpion, snake, owl, frog, goose, stork, and crow; or rather, not only animals typical of the totemic era, namely wild beings found in folktales and legends, but also animals typical of an agrarian society dedicated to farming and raising livestock. As Alinei himself suggests, the heterogeneity of the repertoire itself should be considered an indication that comparisons with an animal depend on cultural rather than metaphoric reasons, and at the same time reveal how the motivation was accepted and re-proposed even in the periods following the first and oldest hunting and gathering era.

4.1. Swine

Compound names like ‘swine + flower/thistle/cabbage/rose’ etc. are present in several Germanic languages, so we found *saublume* (in Austria and Switzerland), *saudistel* (in Germany), *schweinblume* and *saublume* in Switzerland and *sow-thistle* in English. This type seems to be more common in Norwegian (with *sauablom* in 7 Points) and above all in Swedish, with the following compounds: *svintistel*, *svintoppa* ‘swine flower’, *svinörta* ‘swine herb’, *svinmil(l)a* ‘swine flower’, *svinkål* ‘swine cabbage’, *grisblomma* ‘pig flower’[26]. In the Romance languages expressions similar to those found in the Germanic languages are very rare as the isolated South Italian types [ɛrba majal'etta] ‘little swine grass’,

[26] In German-speaking Gressoney, in Italy, we find also [ʃw'iχput] that is *saukraut*.

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the Rhaeto-Romance *flur piertg* and the Occitan [ẽgrayse pwar] ‘get fat the pig’ and [pjous'ɛlo] ‘suckling pig’ show. Concerning the Baltic languages we can notice that in Lithuanian and Latvian there are some compound forms such as ‘milk+pig’ probably due to the vast number of types based on ‘milk’ (see 1.1.), to which is added the reference ‘pig’, very common, as we have seen, in Germanic languages.

4.2. Horse

In Frisian (*hijngsteblom*, *hoarsblom*), Dutch (*paardebloem*), Norwegian (*hesteblom*, *hesteblomst*) and in some localities of Swedish (*hästblomma*, *hästört*) the type ‘horse flower’ is attested, with only one example in Slavic languages like the Serbian *konjski radić* ‘the horse’s chicory’.

4.3. Cow

The type ‘cow flower’ (*kuhenblume*) is widespread in German with only one other occurrence in Swedish *kofibla*. Regarding the German noun, it is interesting to know that according to popular beliefs the dandelion, because of its milky juice, is considered a useful remedy for cows whose milk was stolen by witches (HDA).

4.4. Dog

In Dutch (*hondebloeme*) and German (*hundeblume*) the type ‘dog flower’ is also attested. As we have seen (3.1.) in various Italian dialects a similar compound form, [piʃʃak'ane], occurs in which the animal has been associated with the known diuretic properties of dandelion.

4.5. Rooster and hen

In French we find some claims like *cochet* ‘small rooster’, *cocu*, another noun for ‘rooster’, and in Occitan *galina grassa*, that means ‘fat hen’.

4.6. Other animals

Finally, in many of the languages examined some sporadic compound terms relating to other types of animals have come up. Thus, we have ‘cat grass’ in Danish (*kattenhurt*), ‘goose flower’ in Swedish (*gåsblomma*), ‘the stork’s flowers’ in Serbian (*rodino cvijece)* and ‘the frog’s flower’ in Slovak (*žabací kvet*). We can mention here some cases in which the dandelion is simply called by the name of an animal, without further specification, like the South Italian [palumm'ɛddə] ‘little pigeon’, the Bulgarian *kotence* ‘kitten (fluffy)’, the Macedonian *bušeta*, probably

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the plural form of *buše*, diminutive of *buv* ‘owl’. If in these cases we can assume the fluffy aspect of dandelion is associated with animals, other forms like the North and South Italian [skərpj'oni] ‘scorpion’[27], the Danish *snogeurt* ‘snake-plant’ or the Swedish *ormros* ‘snake-rose’ rather suggest a negative image of the dandelion, perhaps because it easily takes root and it is difficult to eradicate, or because of its negative effects on the human organism[28].

4.7. Lion’s tooth

Of all the names referring to parts of animals the type ‘lion’s tooth’, recorded in Medieval Latin *dens leonis,* stands out because of its frequency. Although this name is generally explained by the indented form of the dandelion’s leaves, it cannot be ruled out that the dandelion’s use in folk medicine to cure toothaches, found, for example, in Germany[29], as well as the ancient use of teeth as magic and protective charms, both contributed to its popularity. It appears in the French [dãd lj'ɔ̃] and [lɔ̃ dɛ̃] ‘lion tooth’[30], in the South Italian [ri'ente də lə'jonə], and, as a loan word from Spanish, in the Catalan [dj'ente ðe le'on]. From the Middle French *dent de lion* this type arrived in English (*dandelion*), in Scots (*dandylion, dandy*) and in Welsh (*dandelion*, *dant y llew*). Even the German form *löwenzahn* is a translation of the Medieval Latin *dens leonis* and it is widespread in Austria and particularly in Germany[31], with some items in Danish (*løvetand*) and Dutch (*ganzetong*). Also in Norwegian the form *løvetann* is the most common type.

4.8. Dog’s tooth

Other similar nouns are the North Italian [dent de kaŋ] ‘dog’s tooth’, and the Gallo-Roman *dent de chien* in France.

4.9. Pig snout

The type ‘pig snout’ ‘snout’ or ‘muzzle’, common to large areas of Gallo-Romania, has been considered a metaphoric expression, because when dandelions are in bud they may look like the muzzle of an animal, as suggested by the name *rostrum porcinum* that appears in medieval herbals next to the most popular *dens leonis*. Thus, from the Latin *murru* ‘muzzle, mouth’ (REW 5762) comes the French

[27] These forms explicitly refer to the leaf, because the fruit takes another name.

[28] Regarding the Italian form the ancient identification of the plant with the animal might be derived from the therapeutic use of the dandelion against scorpion stings as recounted by Baldassarre Pisanelli, a doctor from Bologna in the 1500s (Pisanelli 1611 [1972]).

[29] “Bei Zahnweh soll man Lowenzahn Blätter solange anhängen, bis sie trocken sind” (HDA: 1439).

[30] The last one in Switzerland.

[31] It also appears in Várgeszetes, a German-speaking place in Hungary.

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[m'ure] as well as the Occitan derived form *moralhon* and the compound forms ‘muzzle + porcine/pig’ such as [mur puns'iŋ], [m'ure pursj'ɛu], [m'ure də pɔr]. Among the Germanic languages this last type occurs only in Swedish (*svinetryne*). In occidental Romance languages we find other similar forms from Late Latin *grunium* ‘snout’ (REW 3894; FEW IV: 293b) like the French ['grunj], the Italian [gr'uɲɲo], derived forms like the Franco Provençal [grunj'e] and the North Italian [gruɲal'ɔ̃] and compound forms such as the French [ɡrwɛ̃ d pɔr] ‘pig snout’ and the North Italian [ɡruɲ pisakaŋ] ‘snot pissing dog’. The Occitan [m'ure də 'fedo] ‘muzzle sheep’ seems to be an isolated form.

Except for the Swedish, all other forms related to this type seem concentrated in the Romance varieties, and in particular in Occitan (starting with *murru*), in French and Central North Italian (here starting with *grunium*).

Other similar sporadic forms are the Gallo-Roman in Switzerland [al a kɔrb'e] ‘crow’s wing’, [k'uθa korn'iʎe] ‘crow’s rib’ and the Spanish *codarrata* ‘tail + rat’, a compound form that usually refers to the leaf, and the Slovenian *kozja brada* ‘the billy goat’s beard’.

5. KINSHIP NAMES

Probably because of its polymorphic nature discussed above, a series of popular beliefs have evolved around the dandelion such as the plant’s alleged therapeutic or oracular properties, which reveal its ancient role in magic and religion. This aspect also seems to confirm a series of kinship names remaining in some dialects in South Italy. Among these are denominations such as [n'anni], [tattar'annə], [papar'annə], which correspond to ‘grandpa’ or ‘great grandpa’, and [tsəts'i], a term of endearment used to address an uncle recurrent especially in animal denominations (Alinei 1984: 26). The presence of kinship names of address, namely substitutive nouns meant to ingratiate the plant by calling it by the name of a relative, as attested by its greater frequency among the animal names, may be a clue to the dandelion’s magic and sacred role; the personification of the dandelion pappi and their identification with a dead relative are also suggested by widespread popular beliefs in South Italy that hold that crushing the plant’s seeds blown away by the wind will bring bad luck since they supposedly transported the soul of the dead.

6. HUMAN BEINGS

In Alinei’s scheme (Alinei 1984), the stage of totemism, reflected in family and animal names is followed by a period marked by magical-religious pagan names, which indicate the assimilation of the plant to an imaginary anthropomorphised being, which replaces the earlier zoomorphic representation.

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As far as the dandelion is concerned, the Ukrainian dominant term *kal’baba*, can be considered a linguistic fossil from this period. It covers almost half of the Ukrainian language territory, being registered in 32 places (out of 68). The origin of this term is not yet clear: it is probably formed from the Ukrainian *kul’a* ‘round-shaped object; bulb’, with the reduplicated syllable *-ba* or, most probably, with the term *baba* ‘witch, peasant woman’[32], which also led, by diminutivisation, to the Ukrainian *bobocĥka*. It’s interesting to underline that the same word *baba* occurs in the Bulgarian expression *baba marta* which indicates, as we have seen in 1.4.2, a chimerical and changing being who, in the Balkans, explains the changing weather in the early days of March. The idea of ‘old’ – old man and old woman – is also present in the following forms: the Czech *stareček*, the Belorussian *dzed i baba* ‘old man and old woman’, the Swedish *gubbskalle* ‘old man’s head’, *gubb-blomma* ‘old man’s flower’.

Other examples of human beings are the Swedish *gullgosse* ‘gold boy’ and the South Italian [papu'onnə] that indicates a fantastic being, a sort of bogeyman that mothers invoke to frighten their children (Cugno 2012).

7. CHRISTIAN NAMES

With the advent of Christianity magical pagan beings which governed the more mysterious aspects of the world were often, in the popular imagination, substituted by Christian entities. In terms of the dandelion, this alternation is evinced by designations referring to elements from Christianity, including the type ‘priest’ which stands out for its frequency. However these terms have usually been explained by the appearance of the stem top after the pappi have blown away which resembles a tonsure (Bertoldi 1927) and we can already find this anthropomorphic association in the medieval Latin *caput monachi* and *corona caput monaci*. The names belonging to this field are concentrated in Romance languages and include the Gallo-Roman [kɔpel'ɔ] ‘priest’ and [pajr'in], a diminutive form of *paire* ‘priest’, the North Italian [frɛ] ‘friar’ and [pr'ɛveδi] ‘priest’, the South Italian [munak'ɛɖɖu] ‘little monk’ and the compound [m'unətʃi ʃpaʎʎ'ati] ‘monk without straw’. We can notice that this type is widespread in Rumanian with the form *păpădie*, from the Greek *papas*, through Bulgarian, where *popadija* means ‘the priest’s wife’. The Christianization of the dandelion can also be observed in the popular beliefs rooted in the collective imagination that the fruit can foretell the destiny after death of whoever blows the seed; for example, in Italian and Gallo-Roman domain a widespread superstition holds that whoever is able to blow all the pappi away in just one breath will go to heaven, while the

[32] From Old Slavonic **baba* ‘old woman’ with a great semantic variety, from ‘old woman’ to ‘evil woman’ or even ‘young woman’ (Caprini, Alinei, *Sorcière*, ALE I/7).

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number of pappi left indicates the number of sins to atone for (Rolland 1890–1914). In Germany, when all the seeds have blown away the colour of the pappi will indicate whether you go to heaven (if white) or hell (if black) (HDA).

Nouns such as the Bulgarian *velokdenče*, derived from *Velikden* 'Easter', and the Ukrainian dial. *božuï tilu* 'God's body' have a reference to the Christian feast of Easter, but may also indirectly indicate the flowering period. However, it is worth noting that dandelions are symbols of grief and of the Passion of Christ in theological symbolism.

Instead, some other names clearly belong to the negative image of the dandelion, seen as a plant that is difficult to eradicate, easily takes root, has potentially toxic latex or pappi which can cause irritation. Thus we can explain expressions like the Danish *fandens urter* 'damn herbs', the Italian in Switzerland [fj'o dru di'aw] 'devil's flower' and the Rumanian *floare-mort* 'flower of the dead'.

8. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, this first brief attempt to group the names for dandelion in some European languages based on the implied motivational principles has identified the most prolific denominations and defines the main areas in which they were used. In particular, the derivative or compound nouns that come from "milk" seem to be typical of the Baltic languages and some neighbouring Slavic languages, like Polish, Belorussian and Ukrainian. Terminology of this type is still attested, although to a lesser degree, in the other Central Slavic languages (Czech, Slovenian and Slovak) and in South Slavic languages. In Russian and Belorussian the prevalent names are tied to the idea of "blowing" while they are scarcely found elsewhere, and in the Ukraine the form *kal'baba*, containing the term *baba* 'witch, peasant woman', is widespread. In the Germanic languages in North Europe, namely, in Swedish and Norwegian, names tied to specific aspects of the flower, like the yellow colour or the fact that the flower closes at night, are frequent. Instead, the type 'swine + flower/thistle/cabbage/rose' is found in all the Germanic languages, even though it is more frequently attested in Swedish and in Norwegian, while the type 'horse flower' seems to be limited to the more northern Germanic languages such as Frisian, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish. The type 'cow flower' is confined to German. From the medieval Latin *dens leonis* a lexical type has developed that is even more common in most of the main languages in central and northern Europe, including German (in Germany and Austria), Danish, Dutch and Norwegian, and in French, through which it also spread in Great Britain, where it is a loan in the English speaking territories in England, Wales, Ireland and in Scots. Moreover, beside the compound 'lion's tooth', in Germany the type "butter flower" is also fairly widespread. Generally speaking, the denominations in the Romance languages seem to be somewhat fragmented: in French the type 'piss in bed' is the

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most common, to which the variant ‘dog pisses’ found in Italian dialects can be added. In Occitan derived and compound forms based on ‘muzzle’ and ‘swine’ are more popular. Italian dialects, Romanian and Rhaeto-Romance are noted for a considerable number of derivatives or compounds which refer to ‘chicory’, even though in Romanian the types derived from ‘lettuce’ and above all *păpădie* are more prevalent. In addition to the more common denominations, the dandelion plant, as previously mentioned, typically has multiple other names, some more transparent than others. Often they are related to popular beliefs and knowledge which have taken root in the collective memory over the centuries and contribute to keeping alive the image of a plant of many magical powers; it can be used as a remedy for diverse medical problems and to predict the future in various spheres of life. At the same time, some of these denominations, like the animal and kinship names or the names of magical-religious beings, seem to support the hypothesis that the dandelion was used in ancient magic and religion. We believe this aspect will be better defined when linguistic data is compared with data on folk cultures from different parts of Europe and by extending research to include all those European languages that we have data on.

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MOTS POUR 'DANDELION' [«pissenlit»] DANS LES LANGUES ROMANES, GERMANIQUES, SLAVES ET BALTES

RÉSUMÉ

Les auteurs présentent dans cette contribution les noms du 'pissenlit' dans les langues romanes, germaniques, baltes et slaves. Les données sont organisées d'après le critère *motivationel*. On constate la même motivation dans diverses langues, ce qui relève une «mentalité commune» chez les locuteurs, en ignorant le critère génétique.

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