

Parrot Time

The Thinking of Speaking

Issue #6 November / December 2013

The Liber Linteus

Pencak
Silat

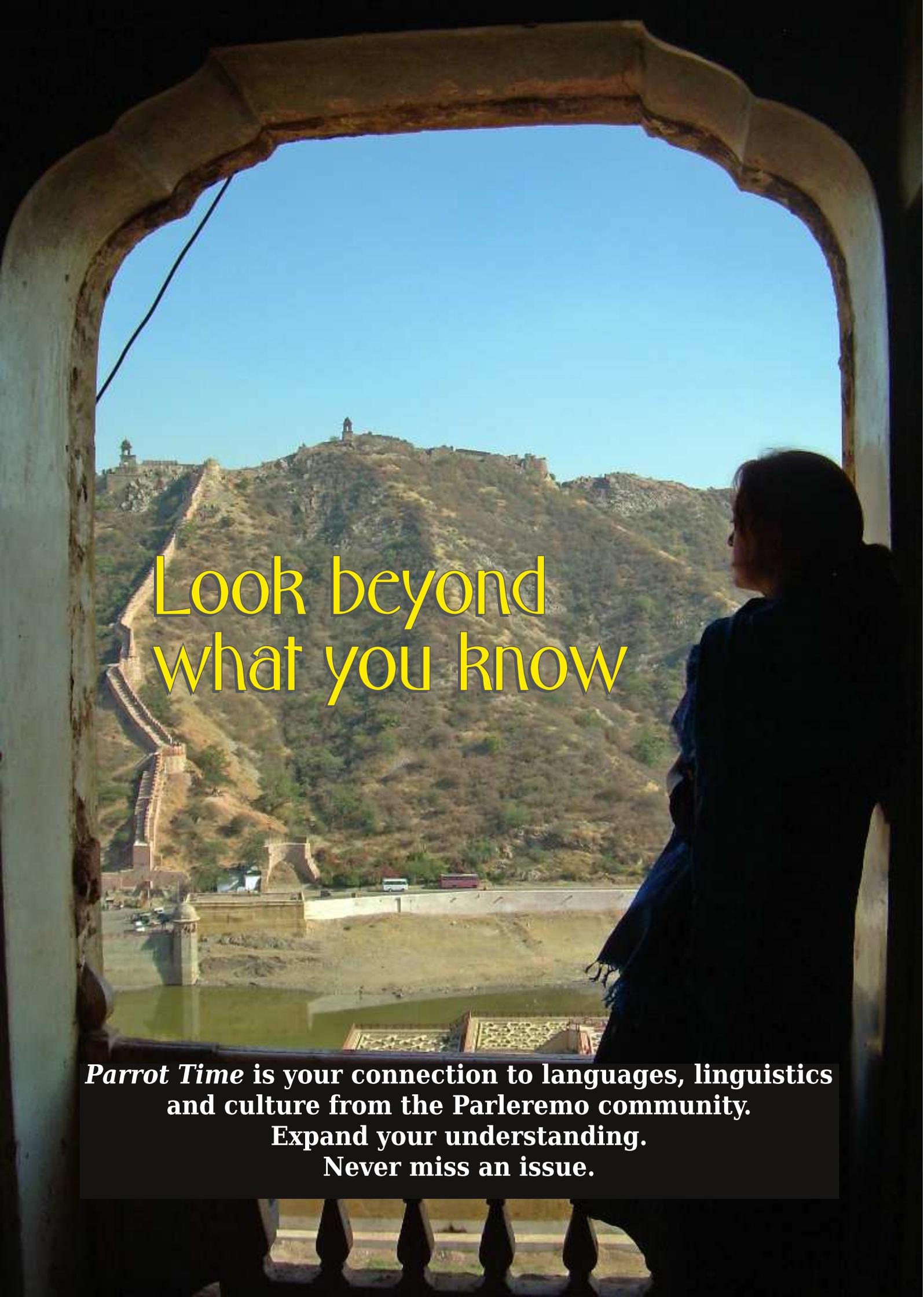
Words From
The Names
Of Animals

Inti Raymi
Festival of
the Sun

Great
German
Authors

Languages In Peril
Pech, Rama, Boruca



A woman in silhouette is looking out from an arched window. The view outside shows a hillside with a fort on top, a long wall leading up the hill, and a dry well in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

Look beyond
what you know

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Cover: Quechua Indian from Ecuador, in the area of Alausí. The Quechuas of Ecuador call themselves as well as their language Kichwa-Kichwas or Quichuas.

Features



6 Liber Linteus - Mummified Language

The Egyptians liked to preserve things, as can be seen with their pyramids and mummies. Something else they preserved, although by accident, is the longest piece of Etruscan text, the Liber Linteus.



10 Pencak Silat

Martial arts are prominent in many Asian cultures, not just as fighting styles but as ways to spiritual harmony. One form which is rarely talked about is found in Indonesia.



20 Cracking the Code

Reading is the first skill most serious language learners master, but that doesn't mean it is easy. It's a matter of finding what works with that language and how it connects with your own.



28 Revisited - Words From The Names Of Animals

Greedy as a pig. Stubborn as a mule. Crazy like a fox. People love to use animals to describe particular traits of people. This article talks about some of these in English.



39 Language Learning Methods - Internet

The fifth in our series of articles about language learning methods is about one of the most powerful forms: the internet.



Departments

05 Letter From The Editor

12 At the Cinema - Bombay

16 Celebrations - Inti Raymi - Festival of the Sun

24 Languages in Peril - The Chibchan Family

34 Word on the Streets - Great German Authors

38 Where Are You?

44 Sections - Neighborhood

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Price of Fame

How many languages can you name? The average person can probably name a handful of languages when asked that question. A person who has an interest in languages could probably name a few dozen. A person *really* interested in languages might name one hundred. Now that might sound like a lot, but considering there is an estimated 6800 living languages in the world, that number isn't really that impressive. It equates to only one to two percent of the world's languages really even being acknowledged by the people who like languages.

Now, this isn't really anything to be ashamed of. With such a huge variety of languages, it is only natural that a relatively small amount of them gain large exposure. But how did they get to that position? Are those languages somehow better than the lesser known tongues? What about the uncountable languages that have gone completely extinct? Who or what decides which become "important"?

I am of the mind that the aspects of a language have very little to do with its success, and that it actually relies almost completely upon the people that use the language. Languages and cultures are bound together, and so they rise and fall as one. If a group of people, be it a tribe, village or country is invaded and conquered, it is likely to find its culture oppressed and even wiped out completely, being replaced by that of the winner. There is a reason that Latin has had such an influence on so many other languages, and it wasn't because it had really cool declensions. It was because of a little thing called the Roman Empire, which dominated large parts of the world for centuries.

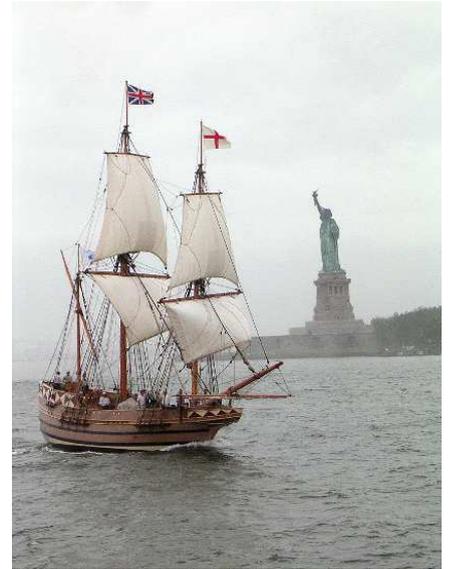
As a nation or people expands its territory, it makes its culture, religion, and language dominant. South America was full of indigenous tribes with rich traditions and tongues, until Spanish settlers found it and decided to take over. Through diseases, violence and religion, the natives soon found themselves to be minorities in their own lands. That became the fate of their languages as well.

This has probably been going on since before history was even recorded. The reason that English is so widely spoken has nothing to do with it being easy to learn and its uncomplicated spelling system; the British did a very good job of colonizing many parts of the world and forcing its *lingua franca* on others.

Colonization isn't the only reason, of course. Chinese and Hindu have huge numbers of speakers, and thus have become "important" simply by expanding populations.

There is nothing really wrong with these languages becoming dominant, so we shouldn't start hating them for being bullies or just because others have died off in order for them to gain prominence. In most cases, it is completely arbitrary on the part of the languages. For example, if the Spanish hadn't settled South America, the Inca Empire may have continued to expand, and most there would now be speaking some kind of Quechua.

But we must remain aware that thousands of languages have become extinct or designated "lesser" or "obscure" so that a relatively few languages could achieve superstar status. Be kind when you encounter them, for it was only a chance of fate that we aren't all speaking Etruscan now.



Erik Zidowecki

ERIK ZIDOWECKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Liber Linteus

Mummified Language

Egyptian mummies are normally valued for the nobles they once were. One particular mummy, however, is valued for how it was preserved.



Ancient artifacts are usually made of something durable, like stone, clay or preserved wood, to help them survive the centuries. One, however, is made of cloth, and is actually a book. The *Liber Linteus Zagrabiensis* (Latin for Linen Book of Zagreb) is the only book made of linen in existence. It is largely untranslated because it is written in the Etruscan language, which itself is largely unknown, and is the longest text of Etruscan.

What makes the Liber Linteus even more unique is the way it was preserved. It was discovered as bandages, wrapped around an Egyptian mummy. The original book had been torn into strips and used to bind the body. This is one of those times in which the items of a mummy are the more valuable finds.

Etruscan

The significance of the Liber Linteus being written in Etruscan is that so little remains of the language today. It was spoken and written in the Etruscan civilization that existed in what is modern day Italy in a time before the Roman Empire. It was the rise of the Romans and their language, Latin, that replaced the Etruscan people and language.

Originally, Etruscan was widespread over much of the Mediterranean. This can be seen by the thousands of short inscriptions found on so much of the regions, dating back to 700 BC. Beyond Italy, Etruscan inscriptions have been found in the Balkans, Africa, Corsica, Elba, Gallia Narbonensis, Greece and the Black Sea.

A few Romans were known to be able to read Etruscan, the last one being the Roman emperor Claudius. He was the author of an extensive twenty volume writing on them. Latin authors wrote about how rich the Etruscan literature was,

however, the Liber Linteus is the only book that has survived the ages.

Even if more text of it existed, Etruscan would still be difficult to analyze because it is a language isolate. No other language resembling it has been found in Europe or anywhere else. Even the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus recognized this, describing it as a language that was unlike any other.

Some aspects of Etruscan remain as part of Latin. A few dozen Etruscan words and names were borrowed by the Romans, and some of those survive today in modern languages.

One significant contribution Etruscan had was the Latin alphabet. The Etruscan alphabet was adapted for Latin and used 26 letters.

Purchase

How the mummy and wrappings were first found goes back to 1848. Mihajlo Barić was a secretary in the Austro-Hungarian Royal Chancellery who resigned from his post and took off on a tour of several countries. While in Alexandria, Egypt, he found the opportunity to purchase a sarcophagus containing a small mummy as a souvenir. It is unclear who the sellers were, but they were likely to be grave robbers or antique traders in Alexandria. He had it shipped to his

home in Vienna, where he put it on display in a glass cabinet in the corner of his sitting room. The mummy was presented upright, held in place by an iron rod. Barić's home had other oddities and art collections he had acquired, so it was right at home.

During most of the time it was there, the mummy was still wrapped, except for its head, which Barić had revealed, perhaps for shock value. It is said that he would show it to guests in his house and claim it was the embalmed corpse of King Stephen of Hungary. He doesn't seem to have noticed the writing on the wrappings, at least not at first, since the writing was on the inside of the linen. Later, he had the wrappings completely removed and put on display in another glass case.

It was in this way that both mummy and wrappings remained until Barić's death in 1859. It was then that his brother Ilija, a priest in Slavonia, became executor of Barić's will. Having no interest himself in the mummy, Ilija donated it and the wrappings to the then State Institute of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia in Zagreb, now the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb.

Examinations

Upon arriving at the Institute, the mummy and wrappings were put under the supervision of



The Zagreb mummy on display, without wrappings

Sabljar, and he was the first to catalogue them. Sime Ljubic replaced him in 1871, becoming the curator of the Museum. Ljubic was the first professionally educated classical archaeologist of this institution and it was his idea to put the Egypt collection in order.

It is said that he would show it to guests in his house and claim it was the embalmed corpse of King Stephen of Hungary.

Ljubic invited German Egyptologist Heinrich Brugsch to examine the remains. Brugsch was the first who noticed the text, but believed it to be Egyptian hieroglyphs, so he paid it little more attention.

The second expert to examine the writings was the English world traveler Richard Burton, who was also a friend and donator to the Institute. He and Brugsch discussed them in 1877 and realized that the writing was not Egyptian. They recognized the possible importance of the finding and believed that they were, perhaps, even a transliteration of the Egyptian Book of the Dead in Arabic.

After realizing that was not the case, Burton had the idea

that the script of the bandages was runic and published his ideas in the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom in London in 1879. This was the first time the Liber Linteus was presented as an academic prospect to the rest of the scientists of the world.

The wrappings were sent to Vienna in 1891 to be examined more thoroughly by Coptic language expert Jacob Krall. He expected the writing to be Coptic (Egyptian written in Greek letters), Carian (an extinct language of the Anatolian branch of the Indo-European language family), or Libyan (the version of Arabic used in Libya), but found them to be Etruscan. He was the first to realize this, and he reassembled the strips into the proper order, although he was not able to translate them completely. This work shows that the linen wrappings were part of a large manuscript. Not only was it Etruscan, but it was the longest ever preserved inscription in this language. Krall published his findings as *Die etruskischen Mumienbinden des Agramer National Museums*



The final resting place of the Liber Linteus: the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb

(The Etruscan mummy wrappings of the Agramer National Museum) in *Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Proceedings of the Imperial Academy of Sciences) in 1892. It remains to this day a significant study of both the wrappings and the Etruscan language.

After this work was published, the wrappings were orthochromatically photographed (using light without a red spectrum) by Josef Eder, who was an Austrian specializing in the chemistry of photography. The results were much better than a previous attempt in 1870 by Croatian photographer Ivan Standl, with the text being captured well on film. Other experts of the time contributed to the study. Julius von Wiesner, a Professor of Botany at the University of Vienna, performed a chemical analysis of the wrappings and ink on them. The hairs of the mummy were examined by Austrian anatomist and histologist Victor von Ebner.

This scrutiny spawned many books, with some having very serious scientific outlooks while others were more science fiction. Many scientists traveled to see the articles for themselves. One of these was Gustav Herbig, a German linguist and Etruscologist (one who studies Etrus-



The Liber Linteus on display



cian). While working with the wrappings to restore them in 1911, he found a new fragment of wrapping with writing on it amid the unwritten bandages. This piece was sent to Dr. Rudolph Robert at the Institute of Chemistry, Pharmacology and Physiology. There, it was discovered that the wrappings were saturated with balm resin and a harmful iron oxide, which would have to be removed.

Little more progress was made with the wrappings until in 1932, when the first attempts were made on it to photograph it using the infrared spectrum, in an attempt to recover the parts that had become unreadable. This worked quite well, and in 1934, a series of photographs were made of 90 of the lines, making them much easier to read. The Liber Linteus was kept in a safe for storage during World War II. After that, they were returned to the Zagreb Archaeological Museum in Croatia. Today, the mummy is on exhibit, but the Liber Linteus itself is kept in a safe to help preserve it.

Construction

The Liber Linteus is not simply a long scroll of continuous writing. When all of the known pieces are lined up, it resembles a book that has all its pages removed and set flat, one after the other. There are twelve of these pages, or columns, reading from right to left. Much of the first part is missing, but the text is almost complete near the end. The book ends with the last page being blank, but the ends of the wrappings are in tact, showing it is the actual end of the writing. In use, the Liber Linteus would have been folded back and forth along the column breaks, like an accordion, making each page be two of the columns, back to back.

The columns are divided into a total of 230 lines and contain

1200 legible words. The ink of the writing is actually in two colours, with black being used for the letters and red being used for the diacritics and lines dividing the text. A red horizontal line is used to mark the beginning of a paragraph. When it was used to wrap the mummy, the Liber Linteus was torn into 5 strips, or *binds*, most being around 300cms in length. These binds ripped horizontally, across the entire length. Bound up as a book, it would have been roughly 40-44cm tall, 30cm wide, and 12cm thick.

Not only was it Etruscan, but it was the longest ever preserved inscription in this language.

While the age of the Liber Linteus is unknown, experts have compared the shape and styles of the characters in the text to other Etruscan artifacts. While the actual date is still debated, with possible times being somewhere between the 3rd and 1st centuries BC, the best estimate is probably around 250 BC. They further conclude it was produced when the Etruscan language was still largely in use, as it would have been produced by a priest or educated person.

Contents

Some words have been translated, so it is possible to guess at the meaning of the text. The most likely theory is that it is some kind of religious calendar. The names of gods have been discovered along with various dates. Similar texts have been found in Roman artifacts, giving details and dates of ceremonies and rituals. This idea is reinforced by the repetition of certain words and phrases, like would be used in a religious litany.



Reproduction of one of the columns

Some of the names refer to local gods, so it is possible to narrow the probable origins of the book. Another clue is the form of the letters. It most likely came from an area southeast of Tuscany, near Lake Trasimeno. It was there that four major Etruscan cities were originally located, and they would have had a few temples that might have produced the book.

The Mummy

Some information was also discovered about the mummy. At first, all they could determine was that it was a female, and the odd nature of the excavation and sale did not give any extra clues. It was thought that she might have some relation to the Liber Linteus or the Etruscan people, but a papyrus scroll that had been buried with her identified her as an Egyptian. Her name was Nesi-hensu, wife of a Thebes tailor named Paher-hensu.

How the wrappings were transferred to Egypt will probably always remain a mystery. They may have been taken to Egypt around 80 BC, when many Etruscans fled from the Roman consul Sulla during the Roman-Etruscan Wars. No other similar wrappings have ever been discovered, and the large body of text is still mostly undeciphered. The Liber Linteus, with its unknown meaning and origins, will remain one of the world's oddest language artifacts. **PT**



There is a movie I saw a while ago, named “Dragon Crusaders”, which, despite its rather sweeping title, was absolutely dreadful. It had a mix of dragons, gargoyles, pirates, zombies and a curse, yet somehow proved to be very poorly done. Perhaps part of the reason is that the princess the crusaders were defending only had a single expression, and that was of someone that had just swallowed a bug.

I did watch the entire movie, however, then read the reviews of it to see how many agreed with my thoughts. Most of the other reviewers thought it was terrible, but they too watched it completely. So why didn't we give up on it immediately?

The one truly good part of the movie was a sword fighter, named Aerona, who joins the crusaders. She doesn't talk much, but was amazing to watch when she went into action. She became a ball of motion, engaging in a mix of sword play, dancing and acrobatics.

Aerona was played by Cecily Fay, who is a real life sword master, and the moves she was performing were from a martial art form known as Pencak silat. I was so impressed just from her time in the movie that, not only did I endure the rest of the mess, but I read up on her and her art afterwards.

Silat is an Indonesian word and refers to this particular form

of self-defense fighting style which focuses on defending against multiple attackers. *Pencak* refers to the performance art aspect of the style and the execution of the movements. *Pencak silat* is the basic name for a variety of forms used in Indonesia.

History

There was once a powerful ancient Malay empire, with its center on the island of Sumatra, part of modern Indonesia. It was called Srivijaya, and during its reign, it had a strong influence over Southeast Asia. It is here that silat is said to have been born.

According to oral history, the earliest fighting forms of art in Indonesia go all the way to prehistoric times. The single-edged sword, shield and javelin were the primary weapons of the tribal inhabitants of Nias an island off the west coast of Sumatra. They remained mostly isolated from the rest of the world until the 20th century. Some of the earliest depictions of silat being used appear in bas-reliefs in Srivijaya. They show warriors

wielding particular weapons which are still used in some forms of silat today.

weapons which are still used in some forms of silat today.

There are a number of myths surrounding the foundations of silat in Sumatra. According to legend, a woman, Rama Sukana, studied the movements of animals while they were fighting and mimicked them to defend herself against some drunken men. There are different versions of the stories, depending on the region. Sometimes the animals are a tiger and a huge bird, sometimes a monkey and a tiger. Sukana took the movements and developed them into an elegant and fierce fighting style, which she then taught to her husband. It was then passed on to their children, with



Maximum extent of the Srivijaya Empire around 8th century



Two women in a Pencak Silat competition

each generation teaching the next.

Sometime during the 6th century, a Buddhist monk named Bodhidharma (think “body harm”) arrived in south-east Asia and presented a form of silat. He came from India and would have passed through the Sumatra kingdom of Srivijaya. The monk’s version incorporated some spiritual training as well as the self-defense.

Silat spread throughout Srivijaya and was developed in many ways in other regions. A form that was especially popular in Java became known as Pencak Silat. Today, Java has more styles of it than any other Indonesian islands. When Srivijaya was defeated by the Chola dynasty of southern India in the 13th century, the Majapahit empire rose in power and took over the region. It united all of Indonesia’s islands and silat rose even further in prominence.

Pencak silat continued to evolve over the centuries, especially after Indonesia gained independence from the Dutch, who had colonized it in 1603. As the people of Indonesia and European heritage mixed, Pencak silat found its way into Europe.

Modern Form

Today, Pencak silat is taught in both Indonesia and several western countries, such as the Neth-

erlands, USA, UK, Spain and France. It is essentially a self-defensive art form, with the primary goal being to protect oneself and not to harm an opponent.

Students train with other practitioners, often in groups of four, in order to master the multi-opponent aspect. Advanced students will train with five to seven others.

Pencak silat teaches the most efficient but minimal moves for best defense. The basic techniques include evasion, kicking, striking, grappling,



Pencak silat Betawi style performed during Betawi wedding ceremony

throwing, locking, ground fighting and the use of weapons. The striking and kicking moves are used to tire an opponent, then grappling and locking methods are used to secure them.

A distinctive aspect of this form is the “baiting” postures, which are called *Sikap Pasang* (Welcoming Postures). They are beautiful and graceful expressions, meant to draw in or distract

the opponent. These stances vary according to regional styles. Pencak silat also uses constant changes of height and speed to achieve fluid movements.

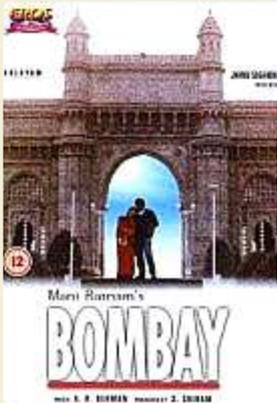
Despite being a defensive art form, weapons are also employed. The student is trained to use a variety of them, including some very traditional ones of silat. They also must learn to utilize other objects around them as weapons.

It can take many years to master these forms. Cecily Fay began training in martial arts in 1991. She won the double European Champion in Pencak Silat in 1995, then began teaching in 2000 as the Senior Instructor of the Seni Silat Haqq School. She also is also a trained gymnast and dancer, which she worked into her routines in the movie.

People teach or study Pencak silat for different reasons, since they don’t need to fend off hostile tribes. They may learn to compete in competitions, for self-defense, mental-spiritual development, or even artistic appreciation. There are major competitions held in a few countries, involving individuals and whole teams. The major international one is the Pencak Silat World Championship, which takes place every few years with over 30 teams competing. **PT**



The main arena of Padepokan Pencak Silat in Taman Mini Indonesia Indah complex, East Jakarta. The main venue of Pencak Silat matches during 26th Southeast Asian Games Indonesia 2011



Bombay
PG-13 141 min
Drama / Musical / Romance
13 September 1995
(Canada)

Country: India

Languages: Tamil / Hindi /
Telugu

When Shekhar tells them that their violence is killing others and asks when the fighting will stop, neither leader can answer him.

The 1995 Bollywood movie *Bombay* is of interest in this review not because of its language or linguistic importance but because of its historical, cultural and religious connections. In some ways, it is a rather typical Indian movie, with a love story that is forbidden, song and dance numbers, and a long film length (a typical Bollywood movie usually runs for around three hours). What makes it different is its focus on major real world events.

In December 1992, riots broke out in parts of Bombay after the Muslim Babri Masjid mosque was destroyed. This pitted Hindus and Muslims extremist against each other, yet many innocent people were caught up in the violence and killed. The police intervened, at times having to open fire, which made both sides angrier, claiming the police were backing the other side.

Violence broke out again in January 1993 due to the continuing tensions as well as the stabbing of a some Hindu citizens. Houses were burned to the ground while people were stabbed, shot, and even in a few cases, set on fire. It is estimated that 900 people died as a result.

The movie starts out a few years before these events. Shekhar, a Hindu journalism student living and studying in Bombay, visits his family in their village. While there, he sees a Muslim schoolgirl, Shaila Bano, and instantly falls in love with her. Shaila

is very shy and avoids Shekhar, who is aggressively following her around everywhere. Eventually, however, she falls in love with him.

Both fathers are violently opposed to the relationship, however, forbidding the couple to be together while also threatening to kill each other. They also accuse their children of trying to bring shame upon them. Shekhar's father, Narayan, tells him he may marry Shaila when he is dead, and Shekhar responds by telling him that he can't wait until he is dead. Shekhar then announces that he will return to Bombay and never come back to the village.

Shaila is devastated by Shekhar leaving, but soon starts receiving letters from him, along with a ticket to Bombay, which she keeps hidden. Eventually, however, her father, Basheer, finds out and declares that she will be married to a Muslim man within ten days. Shaila packs and flees to Bombay before that can happen.

As soon as Shaila arrives, she and



The fathers threatening each other over news of their children's romance



Shaila, watching a peaceful Hindu protest procession

Shekhar get married and begin building their lives together. Before long, Shaila become pregnant and gives birth to twin sons, Kabir Narayan and Kamal Basheer, their names being a mix of both Hindu and Muslim, matching the way they are being raised in both religions.

The religious hostility they experienced in their village is echoed on a larger scale in Bombay, and over the years gets worse. When the boys are six, the first riots break out. The boys become separated from their parents and are caught by a group of rioters who demand to know if the brothers are Muslim or Hindu. When they refuse to answer, they are doused in kerosene and are almost set on fire. It is only with intervention by Shekhar and the police that they are saved.

While the family recovers from this, reports of the riots reaches their home village, and soon Shekhar's father arrives in Bombay, out of concern for his son and grandchildren. Soon after, Shaila's parents also arrive, and the fathers begin arguing again. It seems that the threat of actual violence as well as their shared grandsons has taken a bit of the hostility out of them.

Acting as the reporter he has been promoted to, Shekhar interviews first the police then the religious leaders of both the Hindu and Muslim groups. Both leaders claim that it is the other side causing the violence and that their own people are being persecuted. When Shekhar tells them that their violence is killing others and asks when the fighting will stop, neither leader can answer him.

Meanwhile, the hostilities are rising again. One night, while Narayan is out with one of the twins, a group of armed Muslims approach him, asking him where he came from and what his name is. Basheer with the other twin comes running up, telling the group that Narayan is "one of us", and they leave. Narayan is shocked at being threatened and asks Basheer what he told them. Basheer replies that he told them he was his brother, which greatly touches Narayan.

A few days later, the riots begin again, and a the family's apartment is set on fire. Unable to get

out through the front door, Shekhar and Shaila escape with the twins through the kitchen window. Basheer is involved with prayers at the time and doesn't seem to notice anything is going on until Narayan rushes in and alerts him. He pushes Basheer toward the kitchen, but Basheer refuses to leave without his prayer rug and Qur'an, which Narayan then returns for. Even in the kitchen, however, Basheer still will not leave without the items, despite his wife shoving him. All three are caught up in the blast as fire engulfs a fuel tank, causing it to explode.

Unaware that their parents are now dead, Shekhar and Shaila continue to flee with the boys, but the twins become separated from them.

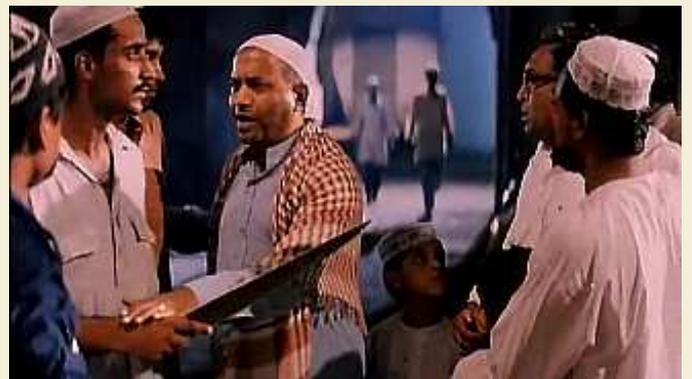
The parents search the streets, then failing to find them there, search among the wounded in the hospital and the dead in the mortuary. They return to what is left of their apartment eventually and find the remains of what their own parents were wearing, so they know they were killed in the fire.

Meanwhile, the children roam the streets, dodging both rioters and policemen, become separated themselves for a time before finding each other again and eventually their parents. The riots end as everyone becomes shocked at what they have done, drop their weapons, and join hands.

The movie isn't entirely factual regarding the riots, especially with that last scene, but the director was attempting to provide us with a somewhat happy ending, despite the losses and scars the family has suffered. The director also uses all the characters to emphasize the brutality as well as the seeming insanity behind the riots.

After Shaila has searched among the wounded, she is horrified at the number of children that were hurt. "What fire of hatred is this that has... they didn't spare even the innocent little children!" she cries to the man helping her search.

When Shekhar comes across two of his friends that are engaging in the violence, one of them



Basheer, preventing a group of Muslims from killing Narayan



Muslim, the other a Hindu, he asks them “Why must we perish in the destruction madmen like you wreak?” The men are ashamed, but try to make him take a side, pointing out that he is Hindu and his children are half Muslim. He declares “We don’t belong to either community! We’re only Indians!”

One of the twins, when taken in by a stranger after being separated from his brother, asks “Why are Hindus and Muslims fighting each other?”, the man admits he doesn’t understand. The boy asks “Who is a Muslim? And what does Hindu mean?” to which the man answers “Religion... is the means to reach God. The Hindus and the Muslims have their own ways.. of reaching God.” The boy then asks “Then why must they fight each other?”

Both grandfathers give us hope. They show that they can put aside religious differences when it comes to family. They also show us the danger to ourselves in clinging to much to the articles of a religion when they are killed trying to save some holy items rather than escaping. Some might see this as a conviction of their faith, that they were willing to die for those, but I don’t believe that was the intended message of the director.

It is both a tragedy and an irony that while the grandfathers were beginning to find common ground between them, they are killed by the very violence they were so ready to inflict upon others at the beginning.

I do have a problem with the movie which might at first seem trivial, but still bothered me while watching it. While I understand that the story needed Shekhar and Shaila to fall in love, I never believed it with the way it was done. Shekhar essentially is stalking her, even at one point boarding a boat she is on with other women, disguised as one of them. She seems to be terrified by this, but he tells her “I could give up everything for you. Would you do that for me?”. Then he tells her to meet him at an old fort later, if she loves him. She does, of course, and they find each other there (after a musical number). We have only seen



Shaila Bano, happy in her new life and marriage

him chasing her, with them not even truly talking to each other, and suddenly, they have this incredibly strong love.

This causes a problem for me in the first part of the film because this isn’t just “love at first sight”. This is “love-and-betray-my-religion-and-forsake-my-family at first sight”. I had a hard time believing that they would be so willing to give up everything for someone they barely know. The movie could have easily made this more believable if we saw a few scenes of them actually spending time together, getting to know each other. The director already does something like this twice in the movie, showing montages of scenes of the couple as they adapt to life in Bombay and how their babies grow into young boys. I just wish this “undying love” was given the same treatment.

This is a very powerful, and sometimes difficult, movie to watch, especially given that it was based around true events. Once can not help but draw parallels to other historical religious conflicts as well as even more recent acts of violence. It can perhaps be summed up best by a single man in the middle of the destruction, lamenting “We’ve had enough! Allah would never approve of this!”.

PT



Shekhar and Shaila, after escaping their burning apartment, searching for their children



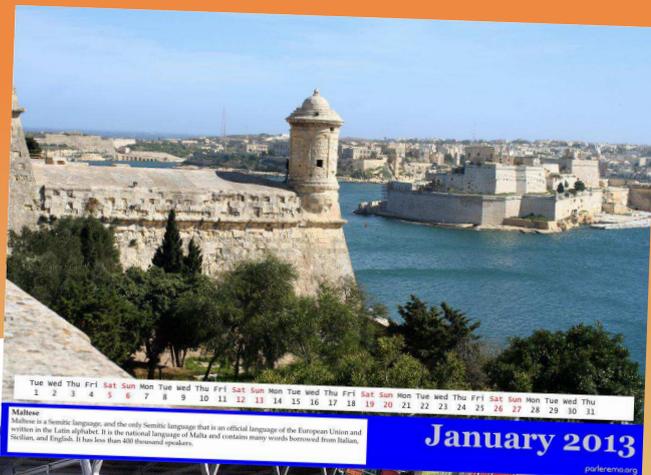
The streets of Bombay, as people drop their weapons and start joining hands

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Dancer in one of the numerous parades during the Inti Raymi festival, held every year in various countries of South America.



Every year in June, the second largest festival in South America is held in Cuzco, Peru. *Inti Raymi*, also known as the “Festival of the Sun”, has hundreds of thousands of people from South America and all over the world gathering for a week of celebration, starting on the 18th or 19th of June. There are street fairs, dancing, and music by local bands as well as some of the best Peruvian musicians.

History

The festival’s origins go back to the times of the Inca Empire. It was a religious ceremony to honor the god *Inti*, the sun god who was believed to be the ancestor of the Incas. It also marked the Winter Solstice, which is the shortest day of the year (for those in the Northern Hemisphere, in South America, which is below the equator, the seasons are reversed, with the months of June & July being Winter months). During the Solstice, the sun is farthest from the earth. With the lack of sun and the cold of winter, the ancient Incas would gather to plead to the Sun God for his return. The method of this worship took the form of people fasting for several days before the gathering, even refraining from any kind of physical pleasure. They would then present Inti with presents as well as a huge feast with corn bread, meat and teas. Llamas were also sacrificed so as to guarantee fertile lands and good crops.

The celebrations continued for almost a century among the indigenous people. The Inca Empire, at its height, had control over much of the east coast of South America, from as far north as Ecuador, down into Chile, and inland to parts of Argentina and Bolivia. It survived until the Spanish explorers found it and, with permission from Spain, invaded it in the 1500s. It took about fifty

years, but the last Inca stronghold was conquered in 1572, and the last ruler, the *Sapa Inca*, Túpac Amaru, was captured and executed. This ended resistance to the Spanish conquest by the Incas. The last Inti Raymi celebration with the Inca Emperor’s presence was in 1535.

Change was swift. In 1572, Viceroy Toledo banned the Inti Raymi celebrations because they were pagan and contrary to the Catholic faith. As conversions of the native people to Christianity began, the ceremonies were kept hidden, but did not end entirely. The Spanish, realizing the risks and futility in trying to completely remove a religious celebration, moved it a few days later to match the date of their Catholic feast of St. John the Baptist. This gave them an excuse to allow the celebrations to continue as well as helping to indoctrinate the Incas to the ways of Christianity. Thus Inti Raymi survived in the form of the San Juan festival.



Hundreds of people dancing in celebration



Local musicians playing on the street

Modern Times

In the 1940s, the festival undertook a sort of rebirth in Peru. An historical reconstruction of the Inti Raymi was created by Faustino Espinoza Navarro and indigenous actors in 1944. This was based largely upon the writings of Garcilaso de la Vega, a 16th century historian and writer from the Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru.

In Ecuador, the San Juan festival was renamed back to Inti Raymi in the 1970s to strengthen the identity of the native people. In other parts, it is still celebrated under the Christian names. It is known as San Juan in the city of Cotacachi and other parts of the Imbabura province. In the village of Cayambe and the northern part of Pichincha Province, it is called *San Pedro*. In the Cotopaxi province communities, especially in the small town of Pujili, it is celebrated as *Corpus Cristi*.

The way it is celebrated varies a bit between regions. Generally, during the whole week of celebrations, various events are held all over, with feasting, dancing and music. In Peru, the main day of Inti Raymi is June 24th. In preparation for it, hundreds of actors

are chosen to represent the various historical figures. It is a great honor to be selected to portray the most important ones, like the the Sapa Inca or his wife, Mama Occla. For the festival, the Sapa Inca is referred to as the *Inti Churin* (Son of the Sun). The reenactment begins with an invocation by the Inti Churin in the *Qorikancha* square in front of the Santo Domingo church, which was built over the ancient Temple of the Sun. The Inti Churin calls on the blessings from the sun, after which he is carried on his golden throne (in this case, a replica of the original) in a procession to Sacsayhuamán, the archaeological complex of the ancient fortress, in the hills above Cuzco. He is followed by the high priests, who are dressed in ceremonial robes. After those come other important figures, like officials of the court and nobles. Everyone is wearing elabor-

With the lack of sun and the cold of winter, the ancient Incas would gather to plead to the Sun God for his return.

ate costumes according to their rank, including ornaments of silver and gold.

The parade travels along streets decorated in flowers, with crowds of people playing music, praying, and dancing. Groups of women follow along, performing specific duties. About thirty of them are the *Nustakunas*, or chosen women, and they scatter yellow flowers. Thirty more women follow them, carrying wicker baskets of fruit and edible tubers, idols and golden amulets. These are followed by a third group of women who use branches of *cedroncillo*, a leafy native plant, to sweep away evil spirits.

At the end of the procession, the Inti Churin ascends to the sacred altar for the huge mass of worshippers to see him. Once everyone is in place, speeches are made by the Inti Churin, the priests and representatives of the Suyos (the different regions that formed the empire). The Suyos are the Snake for the underworld, the Puma for life on earth, and the Condor for the upper world of the gods.

As was done in ancient times, a white llama is sacrificed, but in modern times, this sacrifice is really just a very realistic act. The high priest then holds the bloody heart high in honor of Pachamama, a goddess revered by the indigenous people of the Andes and similar to "Mother Earth". He then reads the blood and animals insides to foretell the future, which we already know: "The



Statue of Pachamama in Bolivia



The Inti Churin being carried on his throne



The Inca Empire

The Inca Empire was the largest empire in South America before Europeans found and colonized the American continents. It had its center of power in Cuzco, which is part of in modern day Peru. In the years from 1438 to 1533, the Incas took over much of western South America, using both peaceful and violent methods of conquest. With the Andean mountain range at its core, the empire encompassed the areas which are now Peru, Ecuador, western and south central Bolivia, north and central Chile, and northwest Argentina.

Quechua was the official language of the empire, with hundreds of local languages also spoken in it. They called the empire *Tawantinsuyu*, or “The Four Regions”. Although there were many methods of religious worship in the empire, the ruling powers imposed the worship of Inti, the sun god, above all others. They held their King, the Sapa Inca, to be the “child of the sun.”



Ecuador, Ingapirca Inca ruins, in the province of Cañar

fat, the blood, the heart and the lungs say that there will be an invasion of enemy people!”.

Lastly, the high priests and soldiers come forth carrying lit torches and set fire to small heaps of straw. Celebrators dance around the burning straw to honor the Empire of the Four Regions, *Tawantinsuty*. Then the Inti Churin and Mama Occla are carried on their thrones back to Cuzco, with blessings being passed along to the people by the high priests.

In Ecuador, many of the celebrating groups travel to sacred rivers and waterfalls to purify themselves in the water. This is according to an Andean ritual of recuperating energy and revitalizing their connection with Pachamama. One of

these purification events occurs in Otavalo. It begins around midnight on June 22nd, when crowds of people travel to the waterfall of Peguche. They are followed by musicians and people dancing. Once there, they climb the small path to the waterfall and submerge themselves. After the cleansing, they return to their villages for more feasting, drinking, and dancing.

A particular feature of the Ecuador festival is the *Aya Uma*, which is a mythological spirit with two faces, representing night and day. Aya Uma is represented using a mask with two faces, and he leads the villagers in a particular dance. They swirl around in circles to represent the two equinoxes (when the tilt of the Earth’s axis is neither toward nor away from the sun), while stamping their feet as an invitation to Pachamama to join them.

In the more mountainous regions of Otavalo, Cayambe and Tungurahua, the festivities often include sports competitions, running of the bulls (similar to Spain), cock fights, bullfights, dance competitions and events focusing on the environment. These may go on for an entire month.

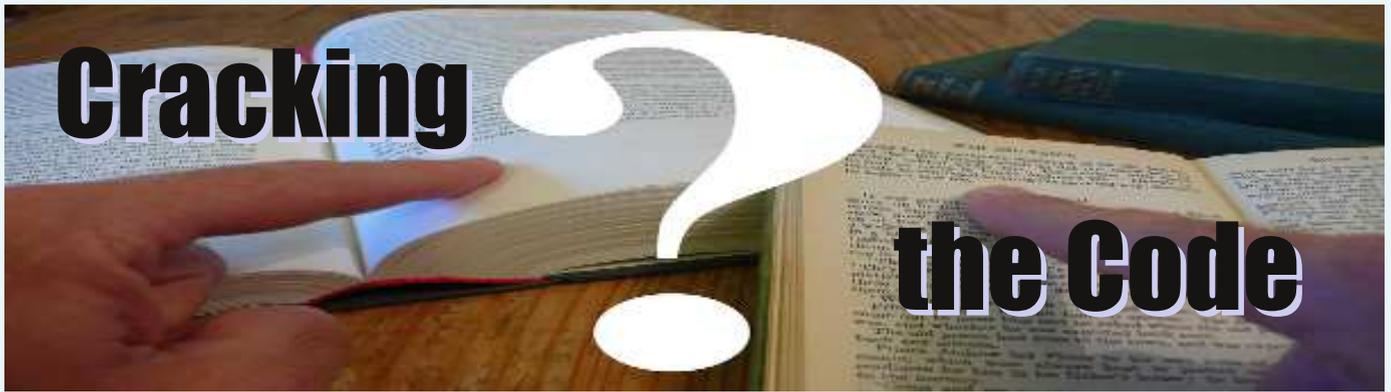
In the southern region, at Ecuador’s largest Inca site, *Ingapirca*, Inti Raymi is a more a serious ceremony, mixing Inca traditions and the local Canari culture. The *Taita Roque Ochoa*, a character dressed all in white, representing peace, gives offerings to mother earth. This is followed by traditional dancing and feasting.

While the Peru Inti Raymi is focused more on worshipping Inti, the one of Ecuador is more of a time of reunion with the family, the community and Pachamama.

Inti Raymi is second only to Carnival in size and importance in South America, and while it is celebrated in a variety of ways, it is always a celebration of the relationship between the sun, earth, seasons and the people of the Incas. Remember these connections when you do your own sun worshipping on the beaches this summer. **PT**



The waterfall at Peguche, where people cleanse themselves for Inti Raymi



Reading is usually the first skill you manage to acquire satisfactorily in a foreign language. Even though you might have memorized some key sentences and their expected answers from a phrasebook or from your beginner's textbook, it is much more likely that you will find yourself able to decipher a text in your study language earlier than talking freely to native speakers. This is specially true when you are an aspiring polyglot who learns languages on your own while still living at your native country.

Through whichever angle you may look at the issue, you will find yourself more exposed to the stand-as-is, non-interactive written word than to any other possible communicative contexts. This is still valid for the social networking age, with its videos, webcams and VoIP conversations.

All this to say that being able to read in a foreign language is usually the first joy, the first epiphany, the first feeling of accomplishment you have. 'How do people usually get there', you may ask?

'It depends' is an automatic answer. In this case, though, it really depends on a main factor: the similarity between the vocabulary of this new language and the one of the language(s) you already know (be it your native languages or others you have learned more or less successfully - every new root that can be as-

sociated to a familiar one counts). If this language belongs to your own native language's family, it may take you only a couple of months of study focused on grammatical words - like adverbs, pronouns and irregular verbs, false cognates and different grammar structures for you to read a text in that language with an occasional visit to a dictionary. At least that was my case with Spanish, then French, followed by Italian, as I am a native speaker of Brazilian Portuguese. Sometimes it can even be frustrating that you can understand a text at first sight, but you lack the active skills - that is, I can recognize the word for an ox - *buey* in Spanish, which is *boi* in Portuguese, but I would not be able to use this word in context if I had not come across it before.

On the other hand, just move slightly away from your language family's comfort zone where you take 70%-80% of the vocabulary for granted due to lexical similarity and you will face a challenge typical of the masters of cryptography during Cold War times.

Some well-known polyglot online celebrities think that ideally you should start this challenge with native materials - that is, novels, essays, newspapers, magazines written for native speakers with no intention in making it easy for the learners of that language - right from the beginning. I personally find it

time-consuming and discouraging to do so. Imagine attempting to read a text in a foreign language you have no previous knowledge of. You have no idea of how the grammar works, and you know barely a word. Even if you have a translation to follow, how are you going to associate one word with the other?

I tend to start with a textbook, and the further the language is to my previous languages, the longer I stick to it. Textbooks, at the least, teach you where to focus, where to start from when there is nearly everything to be learned in a language. You get to learn first things first, and it is usually daily conversational vocabulary. Even if that vocabulary alone - like greetings, asking for directions, talking about the weather - doesn't allow you to read the text, it is nonetheless necessary and it helps you use the language while you still can't understand it. Does it sound contradictory? Well, not really, though there is a period in time when you will have to make choices if your goal is to keep on increasing your vocabulary until you manage to read in the language with little effort.

I will tell you my story with the German language. I started with the course *Deutsch: Warum Nicht?*, by Deutsche Welle. I became exposed to several hours of audio in the German language. After that course, I thought I would be able to read German

newspapers with little difficulty, but that was not the case. The course prepared me for real situations in Germany, but the inventory of words it covered was still limited. I had to find a way to learn vocabulary such as *Regierung* (government) and *Bundesland* (state), which is cognate among English and the Romance languages - the linguistic background I am familiar with. So, my German would work well for a tourist, but I would still be somewhat... illiterate.

The course prepared me for real situations in Germany, but the inventory of words it covered was still limited.

That is exactly the time when you should proceed to native materials. You already understand the grammar, and you are familiarized with an important core vocabulary. It is a pity when such important abstract words aren't cognates, but you still have to learn them. The good news is that they show up so often that it won't take much time for them to stick. Now, more than ever, it's all a matter of starting.

So, if my focus after finishing that course was reading the news, I should have proceeded to trying to read the news. At first, it would be tiresome. Having to look up more than half of the words in a sentence is something that gives the creeps



A woman attempting to read a magazine in another language.

to many language learners. What about knowing each word individually but still being unable to figure out the sentence's meaning, due to lack of practice on topics such as word order? Take it easy then. Start with bilingual sources. Deutsche Welle's website could be a source on its own. Take a story from your native language's page - in my case, Portuguese, and the same story from the German page. Try to read the German page with an eye at translation. In the beginning, you will have trouble. Then you will look up less and less words.

As for German, necessity made me keep studying it. I had to use an outstanding grammar of the Georgian language which was written in German. It was either learning to read German or giving up on my beloved Georgian language studies. I chose the former. The first lessons were nightmarish. I already knew the Georgian subjects from other books, so, I was basically studying German. I had to translate lots of words, sometimes I had to type out full sentences. Then it became easier and easier. Now I'm halfway through the book and I see myself reading whole pages of it focusing completely on the Georgian, without having to worry about unknown German words.

Speaking of Georgian, I took a slightly different approach for it, which I regret. I didn't have many beginner's or even intermediate textbooks, so I had to go for native materials sooner than expected. I chose *The Little Prince*, to be read alongside with the original French text. The problem is that the book is not as easy as it seems, linguistically wise. Don't be deceived by the pictures, it is not a children's book, as it deals with several abstract concepts. This means long words and unusual word order,

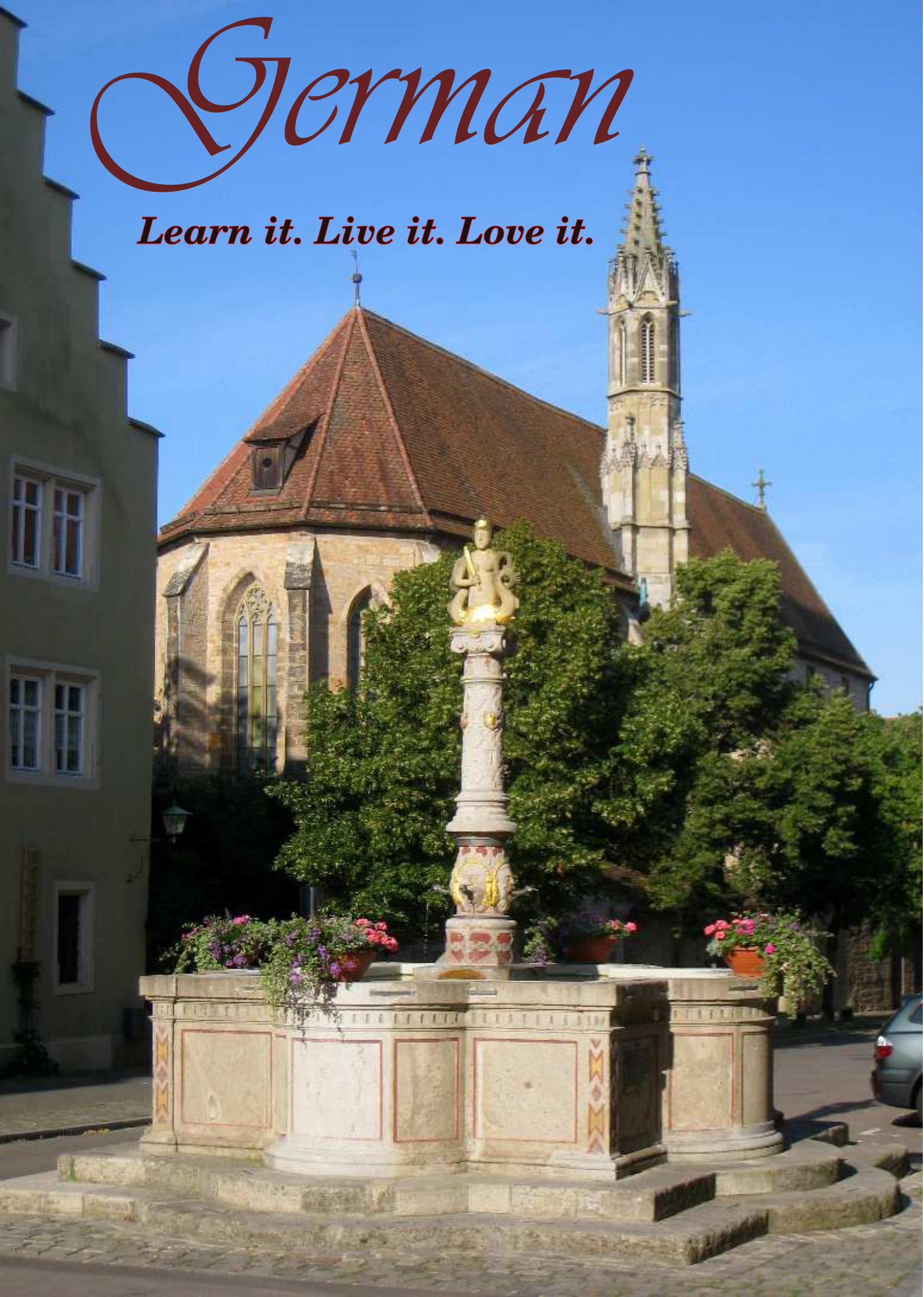
both in the French text and in the Georgian one, as Georgian is an "alien", non-Indo-European language anyway.

So, the reading process was slow and made me more than less motivated. I couldn't follow the story properly, because I got stuck at every paragraph. Every time I would alternate tabs to look up a word, I would come back to the text and miss the line I was reading. Now imagine yourself doing this about 50 times each page, or 15 times a paragraph. Now I know that I should have started with a short news story, a Wikipedia article, whichever source would make me learn some core abstract words which aren't cognate to the English ones. Fortunately I learned from my mistakes, and decided to pick a magazine next. I got its issues in Georgian, Portuguese and even Papiamento, which is a Spanish-based creole and thus poses no difficulties for my reading. After having finished this magazine, I am finally confident about trying another novel in Georgian, alongside with a translation, of course. I even chose a book which has plenty of dialogues, so that it will also help me become exposed to a bit more of conversational Georgian. As you see, 'killing two birds with one stone' is almost a life motto for me.

I still remember the first time I realized I could read a French text. It came sooner than expected, but that is because French is close to my native language. The experience with German and later on with Georgian taught me not to expect too much, not to believe things will be so easy and automatic. As realistic as I became, I also acquired experience. Now I know that breaking the code that represents a text in a foreign language requires patience, diversity of study methods and regular, daily work. **PT**

German

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Languages in Peril

The Chibchan Family

Among the countries of South America, there was once a tribe of indians called the Chibchas. They lived in the high valleys surrounding the modern cities of Bogotá and Tunja in Colombia, having a population of over five hundred thousand. There they thrived until the Spanish arrived and started colonizing the region in the 1530s. It didn't take long for the political structure of the natives to be crushed. The Spanish language began to take hold, but it took it another two centuries before the Chibcha language was completely erased and the natives merged with the colonies.

The Chibchan language branch is named for this extinct language, and contains many languages of the area. Many of them still survive, but almost as many are also extinct. The remaining ones are endangered, some severely so.

Pech

The Pech language, also known as Paya or Seco, belongs to the indigenous Pech people of north-eastern Honduras. While they once roamed much of the region, colonization has largely reduced them to living on a few reservations, with the main ones being Vallecito, Marañones and El Carbón. There are a number of much smaller Pech settlements

scattered around northern Olancho.

It is unknown exactly where the Pech people originated. They may have come from North America over 7000 years ago, but linguistic studies suggest they are descendants of South American tribes. Their language shares many common roots with the people of the south, like the Kuana indians of Panama.

The tribes inhabited almost the entire region from the lagoon of Caratasca to the border of Nicaragua. They were a semi nomadic people of hunters, fishermen, and farmers. Before the Spanish colonization, there were thousands of Pech inhabiting the 26,000 square kilometers of land. They were not alone, however, and fought frequently with the neighboring Miskito tribes. Part of the eastern coast of Honduras and Nicaragua eventually became known as the "Mosquito Coast" after these people.

During Christopher Columbus's third trip to the New World in 1498, he encountered the Pech and named them *Taia*. When colonization began,

their population was drastically reduced by European diseases as well as continual attacks by the Miskito tribes. By the 19th century, the number of Pech left was less than 1600.

However, colonization did not come easily to this region, known as *La Moskitia*. Both the Pech and Miskito people were strong fighters, and the terrain of the area was difficult for the Spanish to navigate. Believing the best way to control the indigenous people would be through introducing religion and converting them, several expeditions of missionaries were sent, with the first arriving there in 1607, then another in 1609. These were burned by another tribe of indians, the Tawahka.

A third expedition was sent in 1611, this time with twenty-



Children in the fort town, Trujillo, Honduras.



five armed soldiers to defend against more attacks. Not only did another Tawahka attack fail, but the soldiers captured one of their chiefs and nailed him to a tree. The Tawahkas responded by attacking the fortified village in January of 1612, taking them by surprise during the night, and killing all the soldiers and religious leaders.

That kept the missionaries away for ten years, but they returned in 1622, this time establishing a fort town, Trujillo. After traveling a few days into the land, they found a Pech village on the Xarúa river. Unfortunately for the Pech, the missionaries found them to be more open to their evangelism, and in less than a year, half a dozen villages with over 700 members had been converted. Pleased with the results, the missionaries continued to impose their religion on more tribes, converting almost 6000 members of the Guaba and Jicaque indians.

They encountered the Tawahkas again in 1623, and when they decided to convert them as well, the head missionaries, Fathers Franciscans and Martinez, were killed. That put an end to any more religious based excursions for many years.

Violence came to the Pech when the Spanish invaded their territory in the Aguan valley in 1661 and the Pech attacked them. Captain Bartolome de Escoto counter-attacked, and in the process captured hundreds of the people and made slaves of them. After that, the missionaries were able to really take over the Mosquito Coast, and by 1690 they had founded several villages with a population of 6000 Europeans.

This lasted for around sixty years, during which time non-Spanish settlers arrived from England, France, and the Netherlands. Pirates, called buccan-

eers, moved into the Mosquito Coast and began attacking the Spanish ships. These buccaneers made alliances with the conquered Miskitos, providing them with guns to fight the Spanish, which they did. By the late 1800s, the Miskitos became the dominant tribe among the others and started invading them. The Pech had no choice but to flee, and so they traveled inland, but their population still suffered heavily. For many years, the entire region was engaged in a power struggle, with the Pech caught in the middle.

While most of the missionaries still worked to rule the native people, the nineteenth century

The Tawahkas responded by attacking the fortified village in January of 1612, taking them by surprise during the night, and killing all the soldiers and religious leaders.

brought to the land Spanish missionary Father Manuel de Jesus Subirana, and he dedicated his life to helping the indigenous tribes. He helped the Pech who now lived in Santa Maria del Carbon to obtain titles for their land in 1862. He started petitioning for titles and rights for the Pech of Culmi, and those were obtained 1898. However, ownership for the natives was a rare thing, and they were normally simply pushed off the land they had by Latino ranchers.

Because of this oppression, most of the Pech have abandoned their native language, learning Spanish instead and



adopting Latino culture to avoid further discrimination. They have intermarried, further diluting their culture and traditions. Now, both the Pech people and language are on the edge of extinction. Estimates from 1993 are that there were only 990 speakers remaining, with less than 20 of those being “racially pure” and speaking the Pech language fluently.

Rama

In the South American country of Nicaragua are the remaining members of the Rama Indians. They live mainly on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua and on the Rama Cay island (a small island in the lagoon of Bluefields). Their native language is Rama, which is one of the Chibchan languages, and with less than 20 people still speaking it, it is critically endangered.

The Rama people are one of the indigenous groups of Nicaragua, but it is unknown how long they lived there. The first use of the name *Rama* doesn't appear in early colonial records until as late as the eighteenth century. Records of the people themselves date much further back. They used to live in small scattered settlements, using the tropical forest



Collection of houses on Rama Cay, Nicaragua

for protection from intruders. While the Rama are distantly related to their northern neighbors, the Miskito and Sumo peoples, various linguistic studies put the Rama in the Chibchan language group. This means they are more closely related to the Pech Indians of Honduras, the Guatuso and Talamanca Indians of Costa Rica and the Kuna and Waimi Indians of Panama.

As is part of the tragic history of many indigenous groups, much of their population was wiped out when colonizers from Europe arrived, bringing with them many diseases that the natives had no immunities to. A Moravian mission was established on the island in 1857. When the Miskito tribes started attacking Spanish colonized areas and the still independent tribes to fill the demands of a growing slave trade in the late

seventeenth century, the Rama found themselves under threat again. While the population decreased, the language also declined. Not only were their fewer people to speak it, but an English Creole began to emerge from Rama and English from

years of contact with English pirates, Moravian missionaries, and black Creoles living in the area.

This creole was very different from the one that developed in Bluefields from the tribes there. Linguists Barbara Assadi and John Holm found distinct variations of pronunciation, vocabulary, and morphosyntax when compared to the Bluefields Creole. There are some elements of a German accent mixed in, probably influenced by the Moravian missionaries who were native Germans but preached in English. Rama Cay Creole, as it is known now, is also a seriously endangered language.

The Rama Cay community is still active today. It has a Moravian church, a community center, an elementary school and a health clinic, as well as several dozen houses. They are hunters, fishermen and farmers,

growing mainly bananas and white cacao.

A study in 1988 found 58 people who knew the language, with 36 of them being fluent speakers. Most were over the age of 25. There is an attempt to revive the language, with it now being taught in primary school on Rama Cay, but most children are not learning it.

Boruca

Another endangered Chibchan language is that of the Boruca people of Costa Rica. It has around 30 non-fluent speakers left, with only six elderly natives who speak it fluently. The younger people are not leaning the language beyond basic ability to understand it when spoken, adopting the local language of Spanish as their own.

The Boruca tribe has about 2.5 thousand members, with the majority of them living on a reservation in the Puntarenas Province of southwestern Costa Rica. Their ancestors were once the chiefs that ruled most the Costa Rica's Pacific coast. The modern Boruca people are known for their art, including their distinctive wood masks being very popular with tourists. These masks are also important in the Borucas' annual *Danza de los Diablitos* (The Dance of the Little Devils) celebration, which depicts the resistance of the "Di-





ablito” (the Boruca people) against the Spanish conquerors, eventually beating them. It is symbolic, not literal, because the Spanish did conquer them. The symbolism is that their spirit was never broken.

The tribe is composed not only of ancestors of the pre-Spanish colonization group but also a mix of people from local tribes, like the Coto, Quepos and

Because of this oppression, most of the Pech have abandoned their native language, learning Spanish instead and adopting Latino culture to avoid further discrimination.

Abubaes. The Boruca people and other tribes of Costa Rica were fortunate to avoid being forced into slavery, mainly because there were so few of them, after the Spanish took over, to make it worth the effort. The settlers of Costa Rica had to work on their own land, and this also prevented the establishment of large *haciendas* (properties). Because of this, Spain largely let Costa Rica develop on its own, and this was good for the tribes because it kept them mostly free from oppression for many years.

Like the indigenous population, the Boruca language man-

aged to survive and was still “healthy” until the 20th century. Part of this may be because the community became bilingual, using both Boruca and Spanish, rather than directly competing. Despite their claims of fighting against the Spanish invaders, neighboring tribes claim that the Boruca were actually very quick to side with the Spanish invaders, hoping to receive better treatment than those that opposed them. For this reason, they are sometimes called *vividores*, meaning “opportunists”. That may be another reason they sustained so little damage to their heritage for so long.

When primary education became more generalized at the start of the 20th century, the schools started forbidding students to use their native language. They were to only use Spanish, and if they were caught disobeying, they were beaten. As a result, the children stopped using Boruca for anything outside of their homes. Soon, the language was no longer being passed on, and the number of speakers dramatically declined.



Faces of the Boruca people

Many Boruca words and phrases can be heard mixed into Spanish conversations, but it is rarely spoken as its own language anymore. In recent years there has been some attempts at reversing this decline. The language is taught as a second language in some local primary schools, but the spirit of the Boruca people has been broken. They are ashamed that their language is now considered so unimportant, and they feel it no longer has a place in the modern world. It seems the Spanish finally did conquer them completely. **PT**

Beachfront of the town of Montezuma, Costa Rica, positioned on the southern tip of the Nicoya Peninsula on the Pacific Ocean.



Revisited



Words From The Names Of Animals

[Editor's note: This article is a reprint from "Stories That Words Tell Us" By Elizabeth O'Neill. It was originally published in 1918.]

It is easy to see how names of persons have sometimes changed into general words. But we have also a great number of general words which are taken from animals' names. Most often these words are used to describe people's characters. Sometimes people are merely compared with the animals whose qualities they

are supposed to have, and sometimes they are actually called by the names of these animals. Thus we may say that a person is "as sly as a fox," or we may call him an "old fox," and every one understands the same thing by both expressions.

The cause of this continual comparison of human beings with animals is that long ago, when these expressions first began to be used, animals, and especially wild animals, played a great part in the lives of the people. In the Middle Ages great

parts of England, now dotted over with big towns, were covered with forest land. Wolves roamed in the woods, and the fighting of some wild animals and the taming of others formed a most important part of people's lives. The same thing was, of course, the case in other countries. So familiar were people in those days with animals that they thought of them almost as human beings and believed that they had their own languages. It was people who believed these things who made up many of the old fairy tales about animals -- stories like "Red Riding Hood" and the "Three Bears."

We often say that we are "as hungry as a wolf;" but we who have never seen wolves except behind the bars of their cages at the Zoological Gardens do not know how hungry a wild wolf can be. Those, however, who first used this expression thought of the lean and hungry wolves who prowled round the farms and cottages in the hard winter weather, driven by starvation to men's very doors. We also have the expression, "a wolf in sheep's clothing." By this we mean a person who is really dangerous and harmful, but who



The hungry wolf, the villain of childhood stories and the theme of pop songs.



A sleeping pig, neither disgusting nor dirty.

puts on a harmless and gentle manner to deceive his victim.

Another use of the word *wolf* is as a verb, meaning to eat in a very quick and greedy manner, as we might imagine a hungry wolf would do, and as our forefathers knew by experience that they did do. Most of the people who use the names of the wolf and the fox in these ways do not know anything of the habits of these animals, but the expressions have become part of the common language.

The same thing is, of course, true about the lion, with which even our far-off English ancestors had never to fight. But the lion is such a fierce and magnificent animal that it naturally appeals to our imagination, and we find numerous comparisons with it, chiefly in poetical language. We say a soldier is as "brave as a lion," or describe him as a "lion in the fight."

A less complimentary comparison is an expression we often hear, "as stubborn as a mule." Only a few of the people who use this expression can have had any experience of the stubbornness of mules. Sometimes a stubborn person is described quite simply as a "mule." Another compliment of the same

sort is to call a person who seems to us to be acting stupidly a "donkey."

We may say a person is as "greedy as a pig," or describe him with disgust as a "pig," which may mean either that they are very greedy or that they are behaving in a very ungracious or unmannerly way. A more common description of a person of this sort is "a hog." Every one has heard of the "road hogs," who drive their motors regardless of other people's convenience or safety; and of the "food hogs," who tried to store up food, or refused to ration themselves, and so shortened other people's supplies of food in the Great War.

Other common expressions comparing people with animals are -- "sulky as a bear," "gay as a lark," "busy as a bee." We might also call a cross person a "bear," but should not without some explanation call a person a "lark" or a "bee."

We may say a person "chatters like a magpie," or we may call him or her a "magpie." A person who talks without thinking, merely repeating what other people have said, is often called a "parrot."

Sometimes names of com-

mon animals or birds used to describe people are complimentary, but more often they are not. It seems as though the people who made these metaphors were more eloquent in anger than in love. A very nice child will be described by its friends as a "little duck." A mischievous child may also be described good-temperedly as a "monkey;" but there are far more words of abuse taken from the names of animals than more or less amiable words like these.

A bad-tempered woman is described as a "vixen," or female fox; a lazy person as a "drone," or the bee which does no work. A stupid person may be called a "sheep" or a "goose" (which is not quite so insulting). *Dog, hound, cur, and puppy* are all used as words of abuse; and contempt for some one who is regarded as very mean-spirited is sometimes shown by describing such a person as a "worm," or worse, if possible, a "reptile." A "bookworm," on the other hand, the name of a little insect which lives in books and eats away at paper and bindings, is applied to people who love books in another way -- great readers -- and is, of course, not at all an uncomplimentary word.



The parrot, a colorful word bird



Is a gull really that foolish?

A foolish person who has been easily deceived in some matter is often described as a “gull,” or is said to have been “gulled.” *Gull* is now the name of a sea-bird, but in Early English it was used to describe any young bird, and from the idea that it is easy to deceive such youngsters came the use of the word to describe foolish people.

Another name of a bird used with almost the opposite meaning is *rook*. This name is given to people who are constantly cheating others, especially at card games. It was earlier used, like *gull*, to describe the person cheated. It then came to be used as a verb meaning “to cheat,” and from this was used to describe the person cheating instead of the person cheated.

Other names of birds not quite so common used to describe stupid people are *dotterel*

and *dodo*. The dotterel is a bird which is very easily caught, and it was from this fact that it got its name, which comes from *dote*, to be “silly” or “feeble-minded.”

When the name of the bird is used to describe a silly person, the word is really, as an interesting writer on the history of words says, turning “a complete somersault.” The same is the case with *dodo*, which is also used, but not so often, to describe a stupid person. This bird also got its name from a word which meant “foolish.” It comes from the Portuguese word *doudo*, which means “simpleton.”

We have a few verbs also taken from the names of animals and birds. We say a person “apes” another when he tries to imitate him. This word comes, of course, from the fact that the ape is always imitating any action performed by other people.

A person who follows another persistently is said to “dog” his steps. This expression comes, of course, from the fact of dogs following their masters. Another expression is to “hound” a person to do something, by which we mean persecute him.

This comes from the idea of a hound tracking its victim down. Another of these words which has the idea of persecution is *badger*.

When some one constantly talks about a subject which is unpleasant to another, or continually tries to persuade him to do something against his will, he is said

to be “badgering” him. The badger is an animal which burrows into the ground in winter, and dogs are set to worry it out of its hiding-place. The badger is the victim and not the persecutor, as we might think from the use of the verb.

The verb *henpeck*, to describe the teasing of her husband by a disagreeable wife, comes, of course, from the idea of the continual pecking of a hen.

In those early days, when town life hardly existed, everybody knew all about animals and their habits.

Many common articles are named after animals which they resemble in some way. A “ram” is an instrument, generally of wood, used to drive things into place by pressure. In olden days war-ships used to have a “battering-ram,” or projecting beak, at their prow, with which to “ram” other vessels. The Romans called such a beak an *aries*, which is the Latin for “ram,” a male sheep. This was probably from the habit of rams butting an enemy with their horns. The Romans often had the ends of their battering-rams carved into the shape of the head of a ram. A “ramrod” gets its name from the same idea. It is an instrument for pressing in the ammunition when loading the muzzle of a gun.

The word “ram” has now several more general uses. We speak of a person “ramming” things into a drawer or bag when we mean pushing them hastily and untidily into too small a place. Or a man may “ram” his hat down on his head. Again, we may have a lesson or unpleasant fact “rammed” into us by some one who is determined to make



A quiet badger, not bothering anyone

the subject clear whether we want to hear about it or not. And all this comes from the simple idea of the ram butting people whom it considers unpleasant.

More commonplace instruments having animals' names are the "clothes'-horse" and "fire-dogs."

We have other words, which we should not guess to be from animals' names, but which really are so. We say that a person who is always changing his mind, and wanting first one thing and then another, is "capricious." Or we speak of a curious or unreasonable desire as a "caprice." These words really come from the Latin name for a goat -- *caper*. The mind of the capricious person skips about just like a goat. At least that is what the word *capricious* literally says about him. The word *caper*, meaning to "jump about playing tricks," comes from the Latin word *capra*, a "she-goat."

The word *coward* comes from the name of an animal, but *not* the cow. In a famous French story of the Middle Ages, in which all the characters are animals, the "Roman de Renard," the hare is called *couard*, and it is from this that the word *cow-*

ard ("one who runs away from danger") comes.

All these words from the names of animals take us back, then, to the days when every man was a kind of naturalist. In those early days, when town life hardly existed, everybody knew all about animals and their habits. Their conversation was full of this sort of thing. And so it is that in hundreds of our words which we use to-day, without thinking of the literal meaning at all, we have a picture of the lives of our ancestors preserved.

We have, too, words taken from the names of some animals which never existed at all. The writers of the Middle Ages told many tales or fables of animals and monsters which were purely imaginary, but in which the people of those days firmly believed. We sometimes hear people use the expression a "basilisk glare," which other people would describe as a "look that kills," meaning a look of great



A hare, which we consider to be cowardly

severity or displeasure. There is a little American lizard which zoologists call the "basilisk," but this is not the basilisk from which this expression comes. The basilisk which the people of the Middle Ages imagined, but which never existed, was a monstrous reptile hatched by a serpent from a cock's egg. By its breath or even its look it could destroy all who approached it.

Another invention of the Middle Ages was the bird called the "phoenix." We now use the word *phoenix* to describe some one who is unique in some good quality. A commoner way of expressing the same idea would be that "there is no one like him." It was believed in the Middle Ages that only one of these wonderful birds could exist in the world at one time. The story was that the phoenix, after living through five or six hundred years in the Arabian desert, prepared a funeral pile for itself, and was burned to death, but rose again, youthful and strong as ever, from the ashes.

In these words we are reminded once again of another side of the life of our ancestors.

PT



The pushy ram, who likes to butt heads

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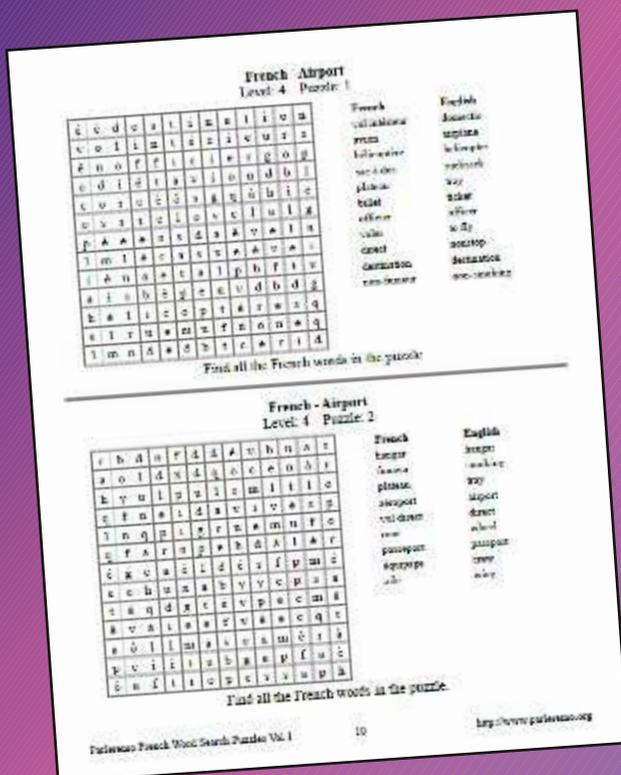
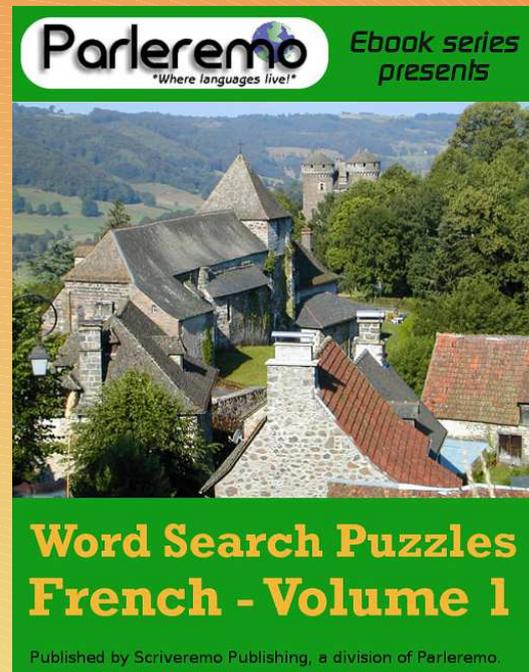
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Word on the Streets

Great German Authors

The streets of Parleremo are named after famous writers for the language of each quarter. This is where we take a quick look at why they are famous.

Goethestraße



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

28 August 1749 - 22 March 1832

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was a German poet, novelist, playwright and philosopher. He is considered by many to be the greatest artist of the German Romantic period and one of the greatest German writers in history. Even today, it is difficult to discuss German literature without mentioning Goethe.

Goethe was born on 28 August, 1749, in Frankfurt, Germany. He grew up in a cultured household, getting lessons from his father and private tutors in common subjects as well as languages, riding and fencing. He learned quickly and was able to write German, Italian, Latin, Greek and French by the time he was eight years old.

When he became sixteen, Goethe began studying law at the Leipzig University, according to his father wishes. While there, he began writing poems and gained some recognition through those. He fell in love with Anne Catharina Schoenkopf in 1766, inspiring him to write his first collection of poems, which he released anonymously under the title *Annette*. Goethe wrote much but threw away most of these early works. One work he saved was a comedy titled *Die Mitschuldigen* (The Accomplices). However, while spending so much time writing, he did not progress in his study of law, and so in 1768, he returned to Frankfurt.

Goethe fell severely ill and remained that way for a year and a half that, during which time he was nursed by his mother and sister. In 1770, he began studying law again in Strasbourg. During that time, he also attended lectures in other subjects, including history and political science. He met Johann Gottfried Herder, a philosopher and poet, and they became friends. Herder introduced Goethe to the works of Shakespeare, which had a large impact on his future writings.

Goethe obtained the academic degree of the *Lizenziat* (*Licentia docendi*) in Frankfurt in

1771. From there, he founded a small legal practice, but gave it up within a few months. After this, he began actively writing again. He produced *Götz von Berlichingen*, a rich drama, which he reworked from the biography of a 16th century noble highwayman, and had his first dramatic success.

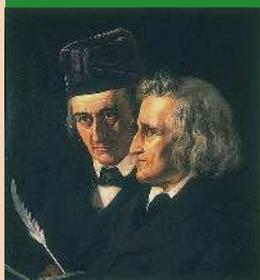
Goethe worked for a time as an editor of a literary periodical, but he did not make enough money doing that to live on, so he started practising law again in 1772. He still wrote, though, and in 1774 he published *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Young Werther), a loosely autobiographical novel. This instantly made him one of the first international literary celebrities and to this day is the most known of his works. Despite the immense success of the book, Goethe did not earn much money from it because at the time, copyright laws were basically nonexistent, so it was easily copied without any payment to him.

Based on the fame, however, Goethe was invited to the court of Carl August, Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. He lived there for the rest of his life, during which he held many offices and published many works. He was also a friend and confidant to the Duke and was made a noble in 1782. Goethe was married in 1806 to Christiane Vulpius.

Goethe's greatest work is *Faust*, a reworking of a legend about a dissatisfied intellectual. The first part of it was published in 1790 and the second part in 1831. He died in 1832, a few months after *Faust* was published, and he is buried in the Ducal Vault at Weimar's Historical Cemetery.

Goethe's complete body of work fills over forty volumes, with both poetry and prose. He is acclaimed for his grasp of public affairs and his understanding of larger truths. His admirers hold him on the same level of genius as Shakespeare and Dante.

Grimmstraße



Jacob L. Grimm and Wilhelm K. Grimm
(4 January 1785 - 20 September 1863)
(24 February 1786 - 16 December 1859)

The Grimm Brothers, or more commonly “The Brothers Grimm”, are known the world over for their collection of folklore and stories they collected and published. They took the tales from many countries and made them accessible for both children and adults to enjoy for centuries.

The brothers were born 13 months apart in Hanau, Germany. Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm was born on 4 January, 1785, and Wilhelm Carl Grimm was born 24 February, 1786. The brothers had very different personalities. Jacob was introspective and quiet while Wilhelm was outgoing. They both had a strong work ethic, though, and were very close. They began studying at the Friedrichsgymnasium in Kassel, and despite their low social status, graduated at the head of their classes: Jacob in 1803 and Wilhelm in 1804. After graduating from there, they continued studying at Marburg University, intending to become lawyers, as their father had been (he passed away while they were still in Kassel). They attended lectures and studied legal science, but it did not hold their interest, and they found themselves more drawn to the study of German and foreign literature.

One of their law professors was Friedrich von Savigny, and it was he who really sparked their interest in history and pushed them toward studying medieval German literature. Like Savigny, the brothers wanted the 200 principalities of Germany join into a single, united state, and through him, they were introduced to several German romantic authors of the time, like Ludwig Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano. They were also inspired by the ideas of Johann Gottfried Herder, who wanted German authors to return to more natural language in their literature. Putting aside law, the brothers devoted themselves to studying Old German and literature.

Jacob was appointed as court librarian to the King of Westphalia in 1808, then after that became the librarian in Kassel. When the brothers’ mother died in 1808, Jacob took on the full responsibility for his younger siblings. He paid for one of his brothers, Ludwig, to study at an art school while also making it possible for Wilhelm to visit their

brother Halle, who was getting treatment for illnesses. After that, Wilhelm reunited with his brother Jacob in Kassel, also becoming a librarian there. It was during this time that they began collecting folk tales at the suggestion of Brentano.

Although the job as librarians paid them little, it did give them plenty of time for research, and they became very productive in publishing. In 1812, their first collection of folk tales, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children’s and Household Tales), was released. More books of German legends followed. The brothers also expanded their research and published works with Danish, Irish and Norse tales. These various works became widely acclaimed and earned them honorary doctorates from universities in Marburg, Berlin and Breslau.

Wilhelm married Henriette Dorothea Wild in 1825, but Jacob never married. All three continued living together. However, they were constantly overlooked at being promoted as chief librarians in Kassel, so they moved to Göttingen in 1830. Both became professors there while Jacob also became head librarian.

For the next seven years, the brothers continued researching and publishing. *Deutsche Mythologie* (German Mythology) was published by Jacob in 1835 and Wilhelm continued work on a third edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. As professors, they established the field of German studies at the university. In 1838, they began work on a definitive German dictionary, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. While it is not as well known as their other publications, it was a monumental scholarly work, for it gave a history and analysis of each word.

After the Revolutions of 1848 in the German states, the brothers were elected to the civil parliament, but their hopes for a unified Germany died, and Jacob eventually resigned his university position. Wilhelm continued at the university until he also retired in 1852. They continued work on the German dictionary, publishing it in installments. After Wilhelm died of an infection in 1859, Jacob largely withdrew from society. He died in 1863, still working on the dictionary.

Perhaps of greater importance to languages than

their publishing of the tales is the way in which they approached it. While at Marburg, they recognized that culture and language are tied together, and they regarded the purest cultural expression as being in the grammar of a language. Unlike oth-

er contemporary writers, who often changed the original oral style of stories to fit a more modern style, they attempted to publish their tales without losing the original traits of the oral language. **PT**

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- 1786 Novella
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Where Are You?

This European city is the meeting point of two rivers. Originally founded as a Roman colony, it quickly became the capital of three Roman provinces. After the introduction of Christianity, it became the major religious center. It was incorporated into the Holy Roman Empire in 1032. A later archbishop developed it slowly into a strong economic port of trade between countries.

The flourishing city grew to become a major textile center, but its resistance to a major revolution brought about strong repression. Troops devastated the city at the end of the 18th century, but it recovered quickly due to an invention of the Jacquard loom that revived its industry. Many other major technical and scientific achievements were born here, including the first veterinary school, a steamboat on one of its rivers, and the Cinématographe. During the first half of the 20th century, it became an important industrial center for textiles and chemistry. It later became the capital of the resistance during World War II (1940-44).

Today, it is still a major river port with a diversified economy. It also has many ancient buildings, including a Roman theater, a 12th century partly Roman, partly Gothic Cathedral, and a 15th century old town. Its 1831 opera house has undergone a renovation with the addition of a glass dome to its original carved stone structure. Annual international trade fairs are also held here. Although it came from very humble beginnings, this city grew into and remains a major city of its country.

Can you name this city and country?

Last month's answer: Levuka, Ovalau, Fiji





Language Learning Methods



Of all the possible ways to learn a language, the internet seems to be the one with the most varied possibilities. It can mix the elements of other methods, potentially being the second most effective means of language acquisition.

I say “second” because no method of learning can possibly be better than old fashioned immersion, in which a person is constantly completely surrounded by the language. That is the method which everyone uses to learn their own native language.

I say “potentially” because one has to find not only a good mix of materials and applications, but they must also find the ones that work for them. Everyone has ways they find useful and others that they don't. Web sites on the internet vary greatly on what they have to offer, and that is what we are going to look at in this article.

Digital Books

The most basic way a site can help is to provide the learner with written material. Textbooks and phrasebooks can be presented in a digital form, just like their written forms. The user can page through the material to read on the screen, or they can print it out to be read offline, like normal printed material.

So why would someone look on the internet for this, when they could just buy a book?

Well, for one thing, there is plenty of free materials out there, professionally created or produced by other language lovers. The Foreign Service Institute, a division of the United States government, created many courses for use in the military, and these are freely available to anyone online. Older books that are no longer under copyright can also be found for many languages, and these range from informational to grammars to dictionaries.

Another useful aspect of these digital versions is that a person can print out just the parts they want at a particular time. With a normal textbook, the entire book has to be carried around, while printed copies of the online forms can be tailored to exactly what a person is learning at that moment.

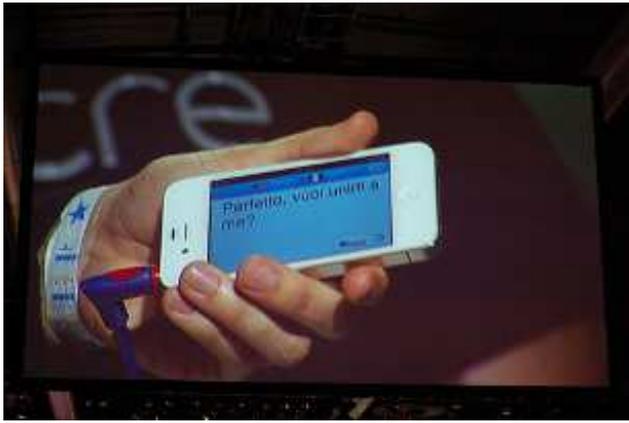
With the increasing number of portable devices, like phones, tablets and electronic book readers, the digital copies can also be taken everywhere without being printed. It's possible to carry a few dozen textbooks around on a device that fits in your shirt pocket!

Flashcards

Originally, flashcards came in thick decks of cardboard. They are now a very popular method of vocabulary acquisition in the form of digital packs that can be handled using a piece of software. The internet can expand that even further by giving people a chance to share their decks with others, completely free. There are a number of sites with huge repositories of these decks in many languages, just waiting to be downloaded or used online. A program can handle all the grading and tracking as well. Many can present you the cards in a variety of formats, including multiple choice and fill-in. Images and sounds can even be included, to better help with the memorization and understanding.



Soldier using non-digital cards to teach children in Iraq



Phone being used to talk to someone in another language

Interaction

A flashcard deck is just a list of vocabulary words, and computers can do a lot more with that. The interactive nature of computers allows those same lists to be used in various other forms of drills and games. *Hangman*, *Memory*, *Matching*, *Word Search* and *Word Scramble* are all interactive games that one can play online, and there are several sites that offer these.

But surely, that can be done with any computer. One doesn't need a website for that. A website, however, can make it easier to find the different language pairs one might desire. It can also be used any on various digital devices without requiring a download. For example, you might have a great word search game on your laptop, but there isn't a version available for your phone. If both of those devices can access a web site which has that game, the problem is solved.

The real beauty of having this online, however, is that you can actually play these games against another person. The original game of *Memory* uses a deck of cards full of pairs of items to find. These cards are placed face down on a surface and the players take turns turning over two cards at a time, hoping to find a match. If the two cards don't match, they are turned face down again and it is

the next person's turn. Playing this game on a computer normally involves either the computer acting as the other player, or the user simply keeps selecting cards. This process might be enhanced by using having a time limit to find all the cards, but in

either case, it is far less competitive than playing against another human.

Having the game on a site allows for the possibility of playing against another player in real time. The two (or more) people take turns playing as they would normally, with the computer taking the place of the cards. The players don't have to be in the same room or even the same country. And this can be

In fact, a web site can do almost everything software can do. Drills and games, interactive readings, audio and visual... if there is a program that does it, most likely it can be reproduced on a web site.

done with a number of games. In some versions, the players don't even have to be studying the same languages. For example, a version of the board game *Battleship* might require a player to successfully answer a vocabulary question in order to achieve a hit. In this way, one person might be practicing Italian while the other learns Japanese, because each of them is getting the questions for their specific language. This can be taken even further, in terms of globalization. One player might be a German

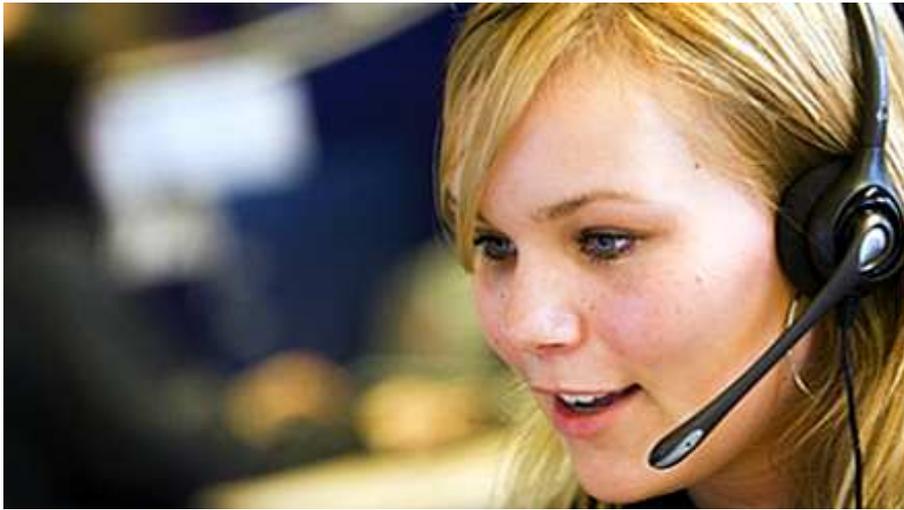
studying Italian, so his view of the game is in German and the questions are for Italian, while the other player might be an Indian learning Japanese, with her interface in Hindi. The web site can be programmed for any of that.

In fact, a web site can do almost everything software can do. Drills and games, interactive readings, audio and visual... if there is a program that does it, most likely it can be reproduced on a web site.

A perfect example of this is LiveMocha. The basic core of this language learning site is lessons in which words and phrases are taught using images, with no native language involved. This method is taken directly from the very popular (and very expensive) software package *Rosetta Stone*. LiveMocha has expanded its site to include many other methods of learning which utilize the internet, like the ones we will look at shortly. These two companies are so similar that Rosetta Stone bought the LiveMocha company and web site in order to expand its user base.

Globalization

The internet is available in almost every country. This opens up so many more possibilities for language learning. People in distant countries can talk to each other instantly. Normal learning methods that interact with others is limited to those immediately around oneself. Someone might be taking a course in German, but they become greatly limited in their growth by access to native or fluent speakers. On the internet, however, they can talk to Germans in Germany and really improve their fluency. This talking can be in many forms as well. They might exchange emails or send messages on a site. They might post to a larger group us-



Woman using a headset to talk to someone over the internet

ing a particular forum. For talking in real time, they could use a chat program and exchange messages instantly. One of the most popular means of doing that is the *Internet Relay Chat*, or IRC. Even more advanced methods exist for chatting, using voice and video through programs like *TeamSpeak* and *Skype*. All of these are completely free for use. Suddenly, the world is a whole lot smaller.

The key part to using web sites is that they can truly be designed for just about anything. One very popular kind of site utilizes just the basics for aiding in the chatting. *Language exchanges* are similar to the old fashioned “penpals” that were used with written mail. A person enrolls in a program in order to find another person for the purpose of exchanging information. This was a method of helping children learn about other cultures, for they would get a penpal with another child in a different country. The language exchange does similar by helping people to team up with others learning a language. The slight twist on this is that the users cross match their interests. The German learning Italian would want to find an Italian learning German, so that they can help each other in their target languages.

A site that performs this function might be nothing more than a list of searchable profiles. They might include a few resources to aid in the people communicating online, like text or voice chat, or simply provide each other’s email addresses. Some sites might even provide a very structured framework for the exchange, like limiting the time spent on each language, so that one person doesn’t dominate the exchange.

Language Feedback

Lets say that our fictional German is practising writing Italian, but he is too nervous to attempt direct conversation. Or perhaps he wants to practise writing beyond what is said in normal conversations. A web site might have a writing area for this. The German could write about any topic and have it posted for others, preferably Italian natives or those fluent in Italian, reviewing it. They could then post responses to the writing, making corrections and giving explanations. This method of learning through feedback has be-

come popular on a number of sites, most notably *Lang-8*, a Japanese based site, in which members constantly help each other improve their writing skills in other languages.

But computers are more than just textual mediums. They can also provide audio and video, and some sites also take advantage of that. The writing practice system could also be done for audio, with people recording themselves reading texts and posting those for review. Responders could then possibly post text or their own recordings to aid the learner. Both of these setups allow for groups to help each other. It also provides a global classroom format without a teacher, with each person learning at their own pace while getting personalized attention.

World Media

Some people like to use foreign magazines and newspapers to aid in their learning. These materials give them access to the language as it is in every day use and not as planned exercises or stories. They become exposed to the culture of the country as well, making it easier to relate. However, unless one lives in a large city, it can often be hard to find foreign newspapers and magazines on a regular basis that also doesn’t cost a lot of



Web site with language teaching videos



money for importing. Normal subscriptions of local publications can already be costly, and this can easily double or triple on imports.

The internet can give people access to plenty of this media online, and most of the time its free. The amount available will of course vary among language and country, similar to access to the printed forms. Also, some languages will have no such materials if they are no longer used in modern life, such as Latin or Greek, but for at least the major languages, there is plenty available.

Television and radio are also ways of broadcasting information, and there both TV and radio stations freely available for watching and listening to. These various streams might require some additional software to play, and they might not be available all the time, however. In that regard, they are no different than needing a radio or TV to get local broadcasts that are only on at certain times.

Some of these stations might also offer pre-recorded shows, which are referred to as “Video



Woman listening to a podcast on her MP3 player

on Demand” or just “VOD” for videos and *podcasts* for audio programs.

Podcasts have, in fact, become very popular on the web as a means of hearing programs. They can be found on thousands of sites, presenting just about anything. They might be played from the site in a streaming format or downloadable to be played on a computer or portable device. In this fashion, the audio learning method can be duplicated and expanded using the internet. Our German learner can download an Italian audio course and listen to it on his MP3 player.

Videos are also created for the same reason. *YouTube* is the major site for people generated and added videos. One can easily search the site and watch music videos and movies from other countries. They will also find a huge number of language teaching videos made by others. Some are professionally done, but most are likely to be done by regular users with their computers and video recorders. Again, all of this is free.

Communities

As you will have realized by now, a number of these learning systems involve interaction with other people online. To make them most effective, it becomes necessary to bring together large numbers of people and involve them in the mutual learning. When this happens, the web site takes on the form of a community, usually requiring people to register to become members. Depending on the nature of the site and the resources it offers, these might be limited in purpose, like Lang-8, or more expansive like LiveMocha. They also might be devoted to a single language, group of languages, or a huge number of languages.

A community can greatly aid individuals in the learning of a

If our German student would like to buy himself a new German-Italian dictionary, he can search the web and read countless reviews on them.

language because they are instantly in touch with hundreds, even thousands, of others that share their interests. This is a unique opportunity, impossible using any other learning method, because it becomes a true international meeting place. As people use the community to learn a language, they can also make friends with people from all over the world, expanding not just their linguistic capabilities but also their global awareness.

Of course, an online community will face many of the same problems as any large group of people. There will be people that are rude and abusive, sometimes only being there because they feel a need to be that way to others. The community should have rules against that and, hopefully, an active group of people moderating everything to remove these disruptive elements. Before that happens, it is possible to suffer some abuse from others. There is also likely to be a large number of spammers, pretending to be other members, who will try to post ads or trick people into visiting dating services. If one is easily upset by either abusers or spammers, they will have to be very guarded in using a community. Its not that this differs from situations in the “real world”, but many people feel they can do these things on the internet because they have a certain amount of anonymity. A person is much more likely to be nasty when they don't have to physically face a person and risk being punched in the face.

Not all communities and



web sites are free, either. Some may give you some basic services, but require a certain monthly or annual fee to use the more advanced features. LiveMocha is one site that does this. When first introduced, it was completely free, but then it started charging for advanced sections as well as the most popular languages (like Spanish, French, and German). After the merger with the highly priced Rosetta Stone, many feel LiveMocha will also become more expensive.

Quality

The quality of the materials on any of these web sites will vary, of course. The English expression “You get what you pay for” definitely applies here. With so much of the materials being produced by individuals and offered at no cost, there is no guarantee of correctness. Getting feedback

from several sources might help with that, and indeed, with there being so many sites available, one could better verify what they are learning, but some work will have to be done.

This doesn't mean that paying for something will mean it is completely correct either. The internet makes it very simple for anyone to set up a web site and sell stuff, so it is a good idea to read reviews from other customers before buying anything. Again, that is also true about non-internet things.

When it comes to buying, the internet can also greatly help someone. If our German student would like to buy himself a new German-Italian dictionary, he can search the web and read countless reviews on them. Visiting language forums and asking other learners what they use is also a great way to find something good.

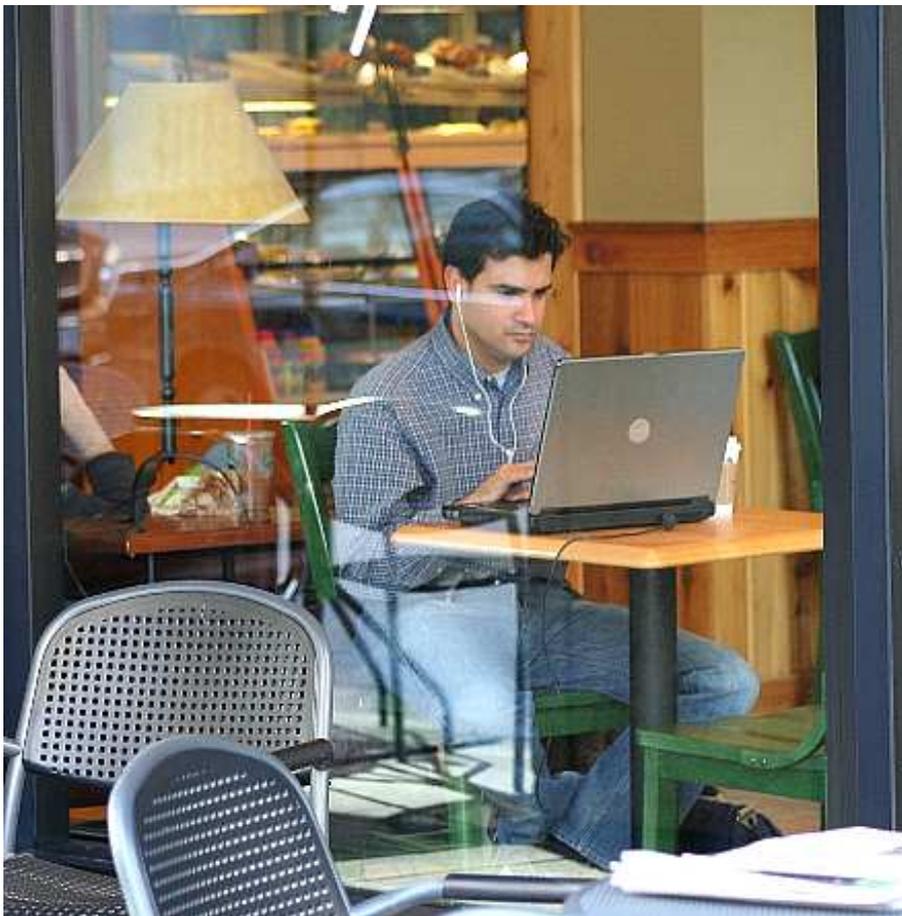
Once our German has learned of a great dictionary, he then has a large number of ways to obtain the book. Major books store, like *Amazon* and *Barnes & Noble*, allow people to order books online and have them shipped all over the world. Resellers, like *Ebay*, may also provide copies, in new or used format, at greatly reduced prices. In some cases, it might even be possible to download a copy of the book, but that is illegal and can get a person into serious trouble, especially depending on the copyright laws of their own countries, so this is not method that should be used.

Other materials can be found online for purchase, like magazines and newspaper subscriptions, audio and video courses, podcasts, ebooks, courses... the list is endless. One can even sign up buy tickets to travel to another country for that immersion experience through online travel agencies.

Conclusion

The internet is the largest information repository on the planet, and it is growing every day, not just in the amount of material it contains, but also the mediums. In this article, we have just talked about some of the currently more popular forms of learning a language, without going too deeply into specific web sites or systems. Anyone that has access to the internet should use that chance to explore what is available to them.

I'm sure there are other ways to aid in learning out there that I am not even aware of yet, so accept this article as an introduction only, not an exhaustive list. Everyone should explore what is out there and find the way that best suits them. **PT**



Man in a cafe, using a laptop to access the internet



Sections is a monthly column about different parts of Paleremo, explaining their purpose and how to use them.

Paleremo is based around the concept of a town for a few reasons. First of all, many times when people are studying a language, they are doing it because they are planning a trip to a foreign country. Their focus is therefore going to be on words and phrases to help them get around the city or town they are in. They will want to know how to ask for a room in a hotel or where the museum is or how much something will cost in the marketplace. It then makes sense to split the learning process into those sections, like a hotel, site seeing, and a marketplace.

The second reason is to give people a way to connect with others learning the same language they are. This is a broader concept that we will explain in detail in this article.

The Divisions

Parleremo has a “neighborhood” which is divided into different *districts*. Each district is the basic equivalent of a language branch or family. Some examples of these are Germanic, Dravidian, Indo-Iranian and Semitic. Each district is further divided into *quarters*, which match up with languages, such as the Germanic district includes the quarters of Afrikaans, Dutch, English, German, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish.

Members are encouraged to join one of the quarters. Each quarter has a few streets which have names associated with authors that wrote in that quarter’s language. An example of this is “Ib-sens vei”, which is a street in the Norwegian quarter, named for the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. Details on many of these authors are given in the monthly column “Word on the Streets”. A member selects a quarter, street, and house loc-

ation. They can even select an image to represent the house.

Moving In

Once a member has moved into a house in a quarter, he or she becomes part of the neighborhood. From the members home page, they can visit the neighborhood, and from there they can see an overview of different things they can access. The first box is a list of basic statistics for the neighborhood, which include the number of male and female members that also reside there, the age range and average, the number of streets, and how full it is. There is also a list of newest neighbors (people living in that neighborhood) and a list of the neighbors that are online.

One box gives the current date, time, and weather for the neighborhood. Another box displays the members house location, giving the district, quarter, street and street number. Below that is a button that will take them back to their “home” page.



A town square in the real world, like the town square of a Parleremo quarter

For those that wish to talk with other neighbors, there is an “Ajax Chat”, which is a chat area of the site that doesn’t require a member to download any extra software to use. There will usually be a few channels for the chat, such as one for the quarter, one for the languages (which is the same as the one connected to the forum), and one for the larger district. For each is shown the number of people currently in the chat and a button to join it. If a member joins a chat, a new window will open. This chat requires Javascript to work.

There is another chat box which connects with the TeamSpeak 3 voice chat. Not all quarters will have a channel in the voice chat, but more can be easily added. The voicechat requires a person to download and install a TeamSpeak 3 client (clients from previous versions will not work).

An event box might be visible, listing upcoming events related to the neighborhood. A member can also create an event from here, and it will be linked into the Parleremo calendar system.

Discussions

These chats, events, and listings of people in your neighborhood are created to make it easier for people learning the same languages to find and help each other. This is taken to an even larger step by the specialized forums. While the main forum area of the site contains boards for many specific languages, there are also a few boards that are open only to people “living” in the same areas. The members likely be able to access the same language forum as the forum, but there are also likely to be at least two others they can use. One will be the special “quarter” forum, which can be used to discuss things that neighbors are planning or doing together. Think of it as a town hall. There is also likely to be a district forum, which would be used by anyone living in the same district. For example, since English, Swedish and Dutch are all Germanic languages, and they all have quarters in the Germanic district, they could all use the Germanic district board to discuss things regarding all of those quarters. Each quarter would also have its own separate board, which the other quarters would not have access to.

Since a primary reason behind these groupings of people by language and branch is to help build a closer tie between members, there is a restriction on how often a person can “move”. That

is, if someone moves to the Swedish quarter, they may not be allowed to move again for 10 ten days. This is setup so people don’t just constantly move from one “community” to another. They can do that on the main boards if they are not serious about learning a language but want to talk about it. The neighborhoods are more about being committed to studying one language.

Places

Besides the groupings, the neighborhood can also aid in self-study. A member can view the entire quarter as a series of streets and buildings, which shows where other members are as well as various places. These places represent places in the real world that a person might encounter. Each place can be specialized, nbut the most basic aspects of them are vocabulary, phrases, and readings.

For example, one of the places in the quarter might be a bank. When you click on it, you will be taken to a page

that shows text related to a bank, like explaining what is done in a bank. There is also likely to be a vocabulary list of words associated with a bank, and a phrase list as



well. These lists could have some links at the end of them so they could be used in some of the games or exercises of the site, like Memory or Flashcards. There could be other parts to the place as well, like a bank could have an area that gives exchange rates between currencies of the world.

Dynamics

It’s hard to be specific about what the places might be or what they will contain because it is very dynamic. Each one can be specialized and can changed over time.

In fact, that is one of the strengths of all of this. The members can help decide how they want each of their quarters and districts grow and change, because they are the ones driving it. It can also be a weakness, however, because of no one takes any action, nothing gets done and no one learns.

We would like to hear your thoughts and ideas on how to expand and improve the neighborhood, in order to make it better for everyone. Meanwhile, find a place to live and share with your neighbors!

PT



Letter From the Editor

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images:

Petey: Godspeed replica

Liber Linteus - Mummified Language

Writer: Lucille Martin

Images:

Svícková: Lake Trasimeno (title)

SpeedyGonsales: Zagreb mummy; Liber linteus strips

Suradnik13: Archaeological Museum in Zagreb

Kalogeropoulos: Column of Liber Linteus

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Pencak Silat

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images:

Viajar24h.com: Sumatra (title)

Gunawan Kartapranata: Map of the Srivijaya Empire around 8th century; Two women in a Pencak Silat competition; Pencak silat

Betawi style; Main arena of Padepokan Pencak Silat

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At The Cinema - Bombay

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

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Celebrations - Inti Raymi

Writer: Sonja Krüger

Images:

bdamon: Inti Raymi Dancer (splash); Inti Raymi parade (title); Inti Raymi parade dancing

jack_g: Musicians

carolynscorpio / Carolyn Scorpio: Pachamama statue

Cynthia Motta: Inti Raymi with throne at Sacsayhuaman, Cusco

Delphine Ménard: Ecuador, Ingapirca Inca ruins, in the province of Cañar

clandestino_20 / Mihai: Cascada Peguche

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Cracking the Code

Writer: Hidson Guimarães

Images:

dumbledad / Tim Regan: Translation choice (title)

pedrosimoes7 / Pedro Ribeiro Simões: Magazine reading



Languages in Peril - The Chibchan Family

Writer: Lucille Martin

Images:

Inti Martínez Alemán: Inside a house in Trujillo (title); Children in Trujillo

MaSii: Rama Cay, Nicaragua

Arturo Sotillo: Faces of Boruca people

Jonathan Greeley: Beachfront of the town of Montezuma, Costa Rica

Petey: Map of Central America

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Writer: Elizabeth O'Neill

Images:

Petey: mule, wolf, pig, parrot, gull, badger, ram, hare

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Word on the Streets - Great German Authors

Writer: Sofia Ozols

Images:

Petey: Spitterfalls, Goethe, Grimm brothers

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Where Are You?

Writer: Sonja Krüger

Images:

Petey: Mystery picture

Language Learning Methods - Internet

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images:

Mangrove Mike: Internet Comes to the Third World (title)

Kevin Krejci: Phone with software

Chris Chidsey: girl listening to mp3 player

Elvert Barnes: Man using laptop

Petey: Flashcards with students in Dhi Qar province, Iraq; Woman on headset; Videos screenshot

Sections - Neighborhood

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images:

Petey: The center of Peshkopi, Albania (title); market place of town; Bank of Nagoya Toyokawa Branch

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and Sushi**

Japan

