

# On the Semantic Basis of Heraldic Propaganda

or

What do Arms Mean, and How?

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# Introduction



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- Swastika adopted by
  - ▶ Finnish air force in 1918
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  - ▶ Finnish air force in 1918
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- How do these associations work?

# Introduction



- Compare to names
- Where's *Washington*
  - ▶ State in North-Western USA?
  - ▶ Capital of the USA?

# Introduction



- Compare to names
  
- Where's *Washington*
  - ▶ State in North-Western USA?
  - ▶ Capital of the USA?
  
  - ▶ Town in North-Eastern England, near Durham
    - Sir William de Wessyngton c. 1180
    - ⋮
    - George Washington 1789

# Introduction



- Similarities between names and arms
- Common perception
  - ▶ Names-and-arms clauses in wills
  - ▶ Cases of surname usurpation in Court of Chivalry
  - ▶ etc. all over Europe
- Linguistic viewpoint
  - ▶ Primarily used for identification
  - ▶ Further semantic content not necessary
  - ▶ Often some vestige remains



# Cognitive Linguistics

## Introduction



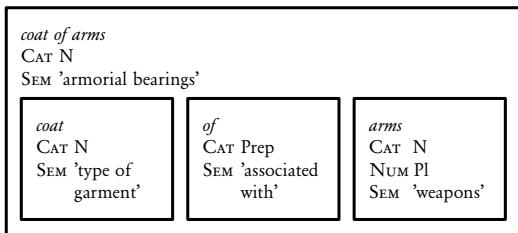
- Linguistic movement since around 1980
- Basic claims
  - ▶ Language is cognition
  - ▶ Grammar comes from conceptualisation
  - ▶ Knowledge of language comes from language use
- Viable theoretical framework for describing place names
- How about arms?

# Cognitive Linguistics

## Basic concepts: construction



- Basic unit for language: *construction*
- Coupling of form and meaning
- Usually composed of smaller elements
- All elements not necessarily fully specified
- Idiomaticity: overall meaning not necessarily sum of elements

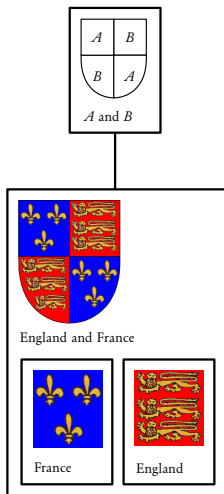


# Cognitive Heraldry

## Arms as constructions



- Arms of Henry IV
- Schematic construction: quartered arms
- Specific instantiation:
  - ▶ France and England as the quarters
  - ▶ Claim to the French throne



# Cognitive Linguistics

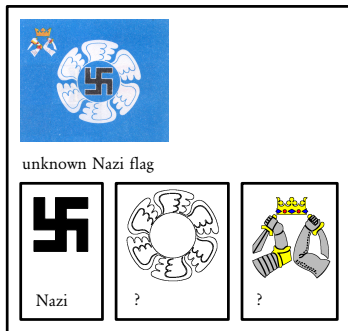
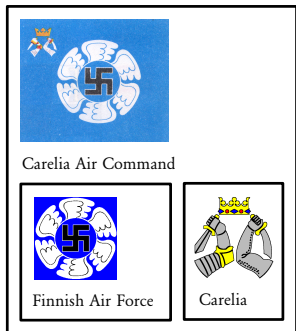
## Basic concepts: entrenchment



- A new construction is hard to understand
- Once it has been heard lots of times, it is easy
- In other words, it has been *entrenched* as a part of the language
  
- The same applies to meanings
- The more often something is used with a particular meaning, the more entrenched this meaning becomes
  - ▶ *Washington*: state in the USA vs. town near Durham

# Cognitive Heraldry

## Entrenchment of heraldic charges



- The swastika is entrenched as a Nazi symbol
  - ▶ Kipling abandoned his swastika badge in 1930's
- This is easily interpreted as a Nazi flag

# Cognitive Linguistics

## Conceptual integration



- New expressions are created from existing concepts
  - ▶ Schematic constructions filled in with specific elements
  - ▶ New innovations from analogy and metaphor
  - ▶ These are all applications of the same mental process
- *Conceptual integration or blending*
  - ▶ Concepts from several input domains or *spaces* projected to a new one
  - ▶ For instance, *canting arms* integrates the concept of speaking with the concept of arms – the arms »speak« the name of their bearer

# Cognitive Heraldry

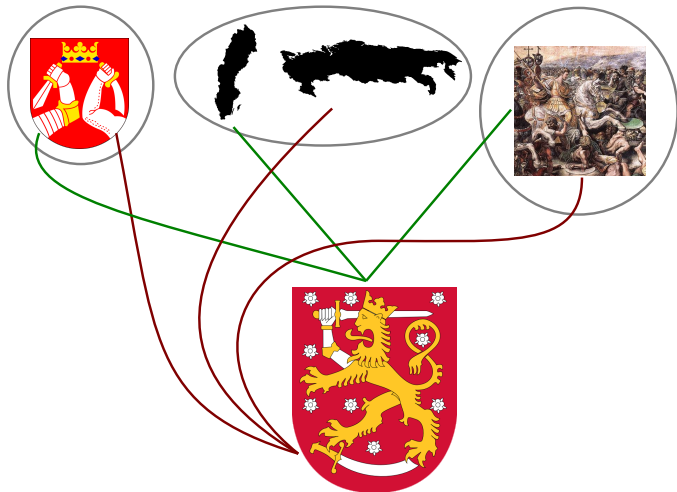
## Conceptual integration in propaganda



- Case: the arms of Finland
  
- Designed in the late 1570's
- Johan III, King of Sweden, assumed the title Grand Duke of Finland
- The title matches that of Ivan IV, Tsar of Russia and Grand Duke of Muscovy
- The arms of the new Grand Duchy go further
- Blend of three conceptual spaces
  - ▶ Heraldry
  - ▶ Geography
  - ▶ Battle

# Cognitive Heraldry

## Conceptual integration in propaganda





# Cognitive Heraldry

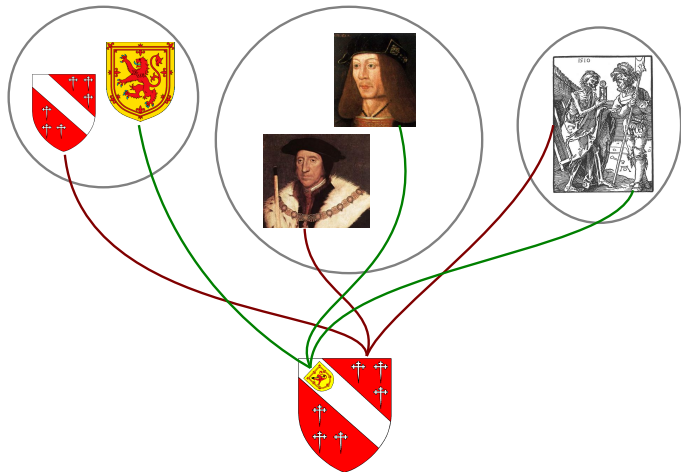
## Conceptual integration in propaganda



- Case: the Flodden augmentation
  
- Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, commanded the English army at Flodden
- James IV, King of Scotland, died in the battle
- The augmented Howard arms can be seen as a blend of three conceptual spaces
  - ▶ Heraldry
  - ▶ Individual persons
  - ▶ Death

# Cognitive Heraldry

## Conceptual integration in propaganda



# Conclusions



- Heraldry is a system for identification
  - ▶ It has some grammar-like structure
  - ▶ This structure does not cover everything
- Cognitive linguistics allows such lack of completeness
  - ▶ Concentrate on the structures that exist
  - ▶ Acknowledge the existence of the rest
- Describe
  - ▶ Regularities as constructions
  - ▶ Semantic content in terms of conceptual integration

# What Next?



- The current work applied linguistic methods to heraldry
- Blazon *is* language and heraldry
- What is the relationship between the »grammars« of
  - ▶ armorial composition
  - ▶ blazon?
- Is this relationship apparent in blazon as a linguistic genre?

# Thank you



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<http://www.cs.helsinki.fi/u/leino/index.en.html>