

## ON PALAEO-BALKAN ELEMENTS IN ROMANIAN ONOMASTICS

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A field of research like the one indicated by the title above is much too vast to be consistently covered by a single person (or, so much the less, in a single paper). Therefore, what this article could do is mainly to urge as many researchers as possible towards some new views on Romanian onomastics as part of a Pan- and Palaeo-Balkan stock. The latter should, I think, be regarded as a *Namenbund* made not only of proper-names which languages of the Balkan *Sprachbund* have come to have in common by *historical vicinity & exchange*, but also of proper-names of *Palaeo-Balkan origin* inherited — in spite of a whole series of major ethnolinguistic disruptions — by Balkan languages of our times.

The directions and tasks proposed here seem to be even more difficult if we take into account the main traditional approaches. Today's researchers have to correct, or remove altogether, a whole range of older authoritative (especially „external“) visions, of which many are untenable for reasons going from insufficient information to ideologic bias and ill-will. In that respect, among the most harmful *negative screens* are the following:

— Pseudo-academic (politico-justificative) ideology, be it Pan-Hellenic, Pan-Slavic, Over-Latinizing, or (Neo-) Austro-Hungarian.

— First-attestation fallacy, based on the wrong idea that words attested earlier in certain languages should be regarded as *origins* of corresponding words attested later in other languages (nothing guarantees that Lat. *cincinnus* is „sans doute emprunt au gr. *κίβινος*“, especially since the latter „lui-même doit être emprunté“ — cf. Ernout Meillet 1985; similarly, it would be wrong to assert that Rom. *brotac* is of Greek origin simply because Gk. *βρόταχος* was attested much earlier).

— Prestige-language obstruction, exerted (often unintentionally) by Greek, or Old Church Slavonic, through which many words of Palaeo-Balkan (i.e. pre-Greek, and pre-Slavic) origin have reached us (sometimes in folk-etymologically distorted forms).

— Misleading interpretations, wrong etymologies, and pseudohypocorism coming from ancient authors (Herodotus, Pausanias), or from more recent ones (Fick, Bechtel, Tomaschek, Miklosich, Kisch, Jordan).

— Forced or incompletely sustained reconstructions (many of them included in the Walde-Pokorny stock) imposed by Junggrammatiker.

— Insufficient attestation for certain SE European areas (including Dacia); palaeo-linguistics often has nothing but a limited number of proper-names to rely on.

— Unreliable transcriptions, due mainly to the fact that proper-names of languages like Thracian, or Illyrian were written down by Greek

and/or Latin hands, and (we may suspect) the two classical alphabets could not properly render certain „barbarian“ sounds.

— Insufficient exploitation (by today's researches) of valuable onomastic material, such as the Greek and not-Greek one of Hesychios, the Illyrian collections of Krahe and Russu, or the Thracian ones of Tomaschek and Dečev.

For a helpful background, we should turn to good account valid conclusions of recent Indo-European studies, from the Gimbutas-Martinet-Mallory line (focused on the steppic factor), to the Caucasian stress of Gamkrelidze-Ivanov, and the autochthonist-immobilist vision (however exaggerated) of the Renfrew school. Older views on Hamito-Mediterranean and Caucaso-Iberian substrates (Ivănescu 1957, Hubschmid 1960, Lahovary 1963) should also be re-evaluated.

Though without helpful early attestations (in comparison with the Near and Middle East), the extremely old age of the Aegeo-Balkan sedentary village & proto-urban life sustains the idea of a neolithic demographic dominant, and of an important degree of demographic-anthropologic continuity in the Balkans. A major sign of that fundament would be exactly *onomastic persistence* in the area under discussion. We may assume that a certain number of Balkan proper-names may be as old as, for instance, the Mesopotamian *Uruk*, which survives in today's *Warka*. Significant persistence may be shown by anthroponyms too; e. g. the massive presence of non-Roman names in Balkan-Latin inscriptions reveals mainly that not even the major changes caused by the Roman conquest destroy the indigenous name-system.

In Romania, hydronyms like *Argeș*, *Criș*, *Dunăre*, *Mureș*, *Olt*, *Someș*, *Timiș*, *Vedea*, as well as oiconyms like *Abrud*, *Drencova*, *Hârșova*, *Mehadia*, *Oltina* have been credibly referred to corresponding ancient attestations (cf. Poghirc 1969: 356—360). I consider that, besides the Romanian toponyms so far discussed as coming from a pre-Romanian substrate, there are many others which may be shown to be of substratic origin: e.g. *Alțâna*, *Brășeu*, *Ciuc*, *Guranda*, *Ilba*, *Ilva*, *Moșna*, *Nemșa*, *Parța*, *Putna*, *Turia* etc. Most of these can either be referred to Thracian, Dacian and Illyrian attestations, or they can be explained through common words of substrate origin attested in Albanian and/or Romanian (cf. *Moșna* interpretable through Rom. *moș* 'old man, forefather uncle' -cf. Alb. *moshë* 'age').

The Neogrammarian (basically Brugmann's) reconstruction of a proto-Indo-European phonologic system proves, in my opinion, to be hardly applicable to Palaeo-Balkan material. We should seriously reconsider the (now neglected) observations of Dečev 1952 on certain „Etruscoid“ features in Thracian. Those observations seem to go hand in hand with those of Furnée 1972 on the peculiar phonologic irregularities and alternations of „pre-Greek“. Furnée took account a system visible in the „vorgriechisch-kleinasiatisch-balkanisch Toponymik“ (1972: 48) and, most significantly for us, his „pre-Greek“ aspects are sustained by quite a lot of Microasian and Northern-Balkan illustrative material. Observe, for instance, the „Wechsel“ shown by: 'Ἀσκληπιός/Ἀγλαοῖδς, Γαῦδος/καῦδος, τρυτωνη/κρυτωση, Ἀκέλης/Ἀκέλης, Μυθονία/Μυθονία, Πάρος,/Φάρος, Βα-

ιάκη/Φαίακες, Μέλανθος, Μελάντιος, Μελάνδιος, Δόβερρος/Domerus, Τίβισκος/Tibisia. I may assert that the same (or very similar) alternations may be found in Romanian variants of certain appellatives, or in closely related words: e. g. *bistriț/mistreț* (the peculiar sour taste of certain wild fruit), *cocoșă* ('hump') /*gogoșă* ('cocoon, doughnut'), *dâmb* ('hillock') /*tâmpă* ('steep hill'), *țarcă/sarcă* ('magpie') etc. Macedo-Romanian (Vlahic) is especially rich in such examples: *căsăbă/hăsăbă/hăsăpă* 'town', *camă/gamă* 'house' (good) family', *barangă/parangă* 'hut', *breană/mreană* 'a fresh-water fish (barbel)', *acumpru/acumbăr* 'I buy', *carabeu/harabeu* 'woodpecker' etc, (some of these have credible etymologies, others are of unknown origin; but all are phonologically problematic). Finally, there are quite many pairs (or series) of obscure Romanian proper-names which raise similar problem: e. g. *Bandu/Mandu*, *Boanță/Moanță*, *Burdea/Furdea/Purdea/Vurdea*, *Oancea/Vancea*, *Oprea/Obrea*, *Tiutioresa/Țuțora*, *Tiolea/Țolea*, *Tinu/Dinu*, *Zărând/Sărând* etc. Such material, can tell us more about pre-Romanian (and Palaeo-Balkan) phonology than all reconstructions.

As regards Romanian hereditary names, traditional interpretations (along the Miklosich-Iordan line) have imposed the idea that besides names transparently derived from Romanian lexical material, there are incredibly many borrowings, especially from (South-) Slavic and Greek. In fact, I have many reasons to believe that most of the (undeniable) onomastic connections between Romanian and those languages should not be viewed as due to historical borrowing (which could be established by form-analysis), but especially to a Palaeo-Balkan substrate community. I must also assert (as I have already done in an article now in print at *Thraco-Dacica*) that typically Romanian are not only family-names which can be lexico-semantically analysed on Romanian ground -cf. transparent derivations like *Ailenei* < *Ileana* (fem. first-name), *Brașoveanu* < *Brașov* (city-name), *Lungu* < *lung* 'long, tall', *Lupu* < *lup* 'wolf' etc, Besides these ones, there are impressively many names of general Romanian use which cannot be interpreted through either Romanian or historically neighbouring languages. Those name are, however, formatively and systemically „native“; and many of them have correspondents (often as obscure) in both ancient and modern Aegeo-Balkan („indigenous“ Microasian, Mycenaean, „pre-Greek“, Thraco-Dacian, Illyrian, Albanian, Bulgarian).

Something special: the idea of a perpetuation of *hereditary names* from a Palaeo-Balkan substrate to Romanian may sound incredible especially if we take into account the rather recent date of family-name officialization in Romania. But, hereditary are also certain unofficial „collectives“, and village-nicknames“ (*nume de sat*, or *nume de rușine*), many of which are opaque in both forms and meaning, and are most vernacular in „spirit“. The solid presence of indigenous second-names in Balkan-Latin inscriptions, and the general presence of Romanian village-nicknames seem to indicate an institution of most ancient age. I also take account the following fact: many of the Romanian village-nicknames look more archaic than usual Romanian officialized family-names (though what functions as a nickname in one village may appear as a „serious“ official name in another). Unlike trivial-flat derivatives like the official family-names *Ailenei* and *Brașoveanu* given above, most of the etymolo-

gically obscure village-nicknames are characterized by very expressive phonic features, such as conciseness, sounds and sequences of archaic-vernacular colour, etc. By such features, the nicknames under discussion (e. g. *Bucor, Bulei, Cioua, Dârna, Durdu, Ghiga, Pițâl, Pricu, Singea, Zăchilă*, all from Banat) are very close to Romanian family-names which have obvious relationships with Romanian and/or Albanian, common words of substrate origin: e.g. Rom. *Abur, Bucur, Dașu, Șutiu, Zotea* (which can be easily referred to Rom. *abur* Alb. *abull/avull*, Rom. *bucura*, Alb. *bukur*, Rom. *das*, Alb. *dash*, Rom. *șut/ciut*, Alb. *shut*, Alb. *zot*, respectively). Moreover, both categories are represented by mono-member names (usually theme+suffix), a type specific to Micro-asian, Mycenaean, Illyrian, and Etrusco-Italic onomastics. There is a clear contrast between that type and the one considered as basically Indo-European, represented (as in Greek, Irano-Indian, Celtic, Slavic, Germanic and partially, Thracian) by bi-member names which are, usually, transparent both formatively and semantically.

To go back to village-nick-names, their great number and institutional status in Romanian lead to the conclusion that they must represent an ancient system. Their perpetuation (safely away from official-administrative interventions) is highly significant for the European SE an area of impressive demographic-anthropologic unity and continuity, and of a dominantly sedentary village-life of prehistoric roots. In such a perspective, we cannot interpret as mere coincidences, or as just inter-borrowings, the many correspondences observed by Jordan 1983 too between Romanian obscure anthroponymy (all mono-members), such as *Brașcu, Bubu, Ipu, Mangu, Minciu, Nelea, Ocu, Persu, Rașcu, Tânțu*, and similar names of Albanian, Bulgarian, or Neo-Greek. But significant comparison can also be tried between Romanian names like the ones above and ancient ones recorded as Microasian, Mycenaean, Homeric Greek, Thracian, or Illyrian. Along such a line, a „short“ hereditary name like the above-mentioned Rom *Ocu* (taken not in isolation, but together with its rich family: *Ocă, Ochea, Oculescu, Oculici, Ocoș*, etc.) should be considered from a Pan- and Palaeo-Balkan standpoint too. There has been an unavoidable tendency towards interpreting names of the *Ocu*-category through common words of one or another historical Balkan language: Jordan 1983 (s.v.) explains *Ocă* through „*ocă*, a variant of *ocă*“, *Ochea* as derived from „*ochi*, by the suffix *-(e)a*“ and *Ocoș* (more credibly) by dialectal *ocoș, ocăș, ocuș* 'clever, witty, conceited, sly'. But could we possibly explain Bulg. *Okō, Okjo* through Romanian appellatives too? My opinion is that much older roots are indicated by Homer.  $\omega\kappa\upsilon\varsigma$  'quick, swift' (cf. also compounds like  $\omega\kappa\upsilon\text{-}\pi\omicron\omicron\varsigma$  'swift footed'.  $\omega\chi\upsilon\text{-}\rho\omicron\omicron\varsigma$  /swift-flowing“). An important argument in favour of such a connection is the existence of a Mycenaean onomastic series: *O-ka, O-ko, O-ku, O-ke-u, O-ke-te-u, O-ko-me-ne-u, O-ku-ka, O-ku-no* (all to be found in Landau 1958); and these, in their turn, may be referred to a Microasian family including  $\text{O}\chi\alpha, \text{O}\chi\chi\alpha, \text{O}\nu\chi\chi\alpha, \text{O}\nu\omicron\chi\epsilon\varsigma$  (taken from Zgusta 1978). Last but not least, Thracian participates in that onomastic field by attestations like  $\text{O}\ \lambda\alpha\eta\nu\omicron$  (an ethnonym) and  $\text{'O}\lambda\alpha\eta\nu\omicron\iota$  (the attribute of a local Zeus) — cf. Dečev 1957.

In *toponymy*, explaining continuity through ages is not a difficult task: it is a well-attested fact that, even under circumstances of repeated historical turmoil and discontinuity, place-names of older indigenous populations are taken over by new-comers (whether conquerors, or mere intruders). But a perpetuation of *anthroponyms* (like the pre-Greek and pre-Roman ones) in the Balkans can be understood only against a background of provable continuity of a cultural-demographic vein. I can see no serious reason for a rejection of the idea that a significant number of Palaeo-Balkan person-names could be perpetuated mainly as family-names, and hereditary nicknames) within the SE European system of rural settlement, after Romanization, and after partial Slavicization. The phenomenon here discussed could occur even in conditions of ethnolinguistic alterations and of interrupted links between proper-names and appellatives that vanished through „language-deaths“. For concrete (and more recent) illustrations of that complex phenomenon, we could investigate the fossilization and re-interpretation of Albanian and Vlah names in certain communities once belonging to those minorities, but now totally Hellenized in Greece. Or, for a pregnant Romanian illustration, I may mention that, when members of the *Cândea* family (like other representatives of the indigenous Transylvanian low-nobility) became magyarized, they did not actually take another name, but merely deviated the original one into *Kende* (cf. *Izvoare* 1989).

As a final stress. I must point out two aspects which I consider to be of great significance for such a tentative approach to Pan- and Palaeo-Balkan onomastics:

1) The correspondence between Microasian and Romanian monomember names are far from sporadic, and they manifest themselves not only in form, but also in system. The two onomastic stocks have so many things in common that they almost appear as extremes (in space and time or conservative peripheral manifestations of one and the same *Namenbund* Microasian and Romanian families of proper-names (with important correspondences in Mycenaean and Illyrian) resemble one another in *themes* (which are sometimes interpretable, other times totally obscure), in *suffixation*, and, strikingly, in *phonology*: e. g. Microas. *Ovaλa* (cf. Microas. *Oλa*, *Ovoλes*, cf. also the numerous correspondents of the Rom. *Ocă/Ocu* family given above), as well as *Ovaυa* (cf. *Oυεις* of the same family) and *Ovaυθα* show exactly the same kind of *a-Umlaut* effects as Rom. *Oacă* (i.e. /wak/ -cf. *Ocă*), *Oană* (cf. *Onu*) and *Oanță* (cf. *Onțoiu*), respectively. Such examples may be used in a reconstruction of an *Aegeo-Balkan articulatory-phonologic system* visible not only in ancient languages attested in the area, but also in Balkan languages of our days.

2) An impressive amount of scholarly attention has been paid (since Meyer and Hașdeu) to Albano-Romanian correspondences in common words. But, as far as I know, no systematic research has been done on the *Albano-Romanian onomastic community* (Iordan 1983 practically overlooks Albanian, while it exaggerates a Bulgarian contribution to Romanian onomastics). As an illustration, I will use here only the following parallel between two obviously related families of Albanian and Romanian anthroponyms: Alb. *Balaj*, *Balak*, *Balan/Ballan*, *Balicë*, *Baliq*, *Balja*, *Ballmir*, *Ballosh*, *Balsha*, *Ballush/Balush* are perfectly comparable with

Rom. *Bălăiu*, *Balac*, *Balan/Bălan*, *Balint*, *Balici*, *Balea*, *Balomir*, *Baloş*, *Balşa*, *Baluş/Băluş*, (cf. Thrac. *Balla*, *Balas*, *Bales*, *Baloia*, *Balascae*, *Balius*, and Illyr. *Bales*, *Ballaios*, *Baloia*). To be observed here are the following facts:

— a) an obvious correspondence, on the one hand between Albanian and Romanian, on the other hand between the two modern languages and two ancient languages of the same area;

— b) a quite clear connection between the two Albano-Romanian families and well-attested appellatives (of most probable substrate origin) in the two languages: Rom. *băl*, *bălaş*, *baloš*, *bălai*, *bălan*, 'white, fair' (which should not be regarded as borrowing from Slavic, although they have relatives there), as cognates of: Alb. *balash*, *balosh* 'white; with a white spot on the forehead' — cf. Gk. *βάλιος* 'white, white-spotted' (a borrowing from some non-Greek Balkan idiom, since Greek has its phonologically „regular“ *φαλός/φαλιός* 'white, light'), Lith. *bālaş* 'white', O.C. Slav. *belъ* 'white', etc. (see Poghirc 1969; 328);

— c) the Albanian and Romanian series (as well as the Thracian and Illyrian ones) have a whole lot of formants in common (and my arrangement points them out): *-ak/-ac*, *-ja/-ea*, *-iq/-ici*, *-osh/-oş*, *-ush/uş*, etc.

The schematic presentation above manages only to indicate some directions and principles that I consider worth observing in all attempts at a more accurate view on the Romanian onomastic vein of provable Palaeo-Balkan origin. My main conclusion is: if we try to go beyond the negative screens mentioned at the beginning of this paper, we can obtain credible results in the study of all possible connections between the ancient and the modern Balkan onomastic systems.

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