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## THE DANUBE BULGARIAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL AREA

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**Abstract:** Articolul face parte dintr-un studiu mai amplu de antropologie balcanică. În acest articol este analizat un material antropologic interesant și specific zonei Dunărene. Materialul este demarcat din punct de vedere regional printr-o semantică ambivalentă. Este vorba de nume de familie rezultate din urbonime. Pe de o parte, ele semnaleză în mod natural o apartență regională concretă, iar pe de altă parte – reflectă legătura comună pe care o au toți cu teritoriul fluviului Dunărea. Este vorba despre onimi de tipul: Vidinliev, /Видинлиев/ Kalafatov, /Калафатов/ Şviştovliev, /Свищовлиев/, Rusciukliev /Русчуклиев/, Calaraşev /Каларашев/, Tutrakanov /Тутраканов/. Această apariție este răspândită pe ambele maluri ale fluviului Dunărea, dar aici mă restrâng prezentând doar datele din Bulgaria, care sunt analogice cu datele culese din România, și este vorba de onomastice. Antroponimele din zona de contact de la Dunărea de Jos sunt polisemantice. Ele sunt unitare în ceea ce privește tipul nominalizării și ca orișice personalizare prezintă conotații în afara discursului lingvistic. Din această cauză ele nu sunt doar martori ai istoriei lingvistice ci și a caracteristicii sale locale. Acestea reprezintă baza unor dispute comparative și a unor studii interdisciplinare.

**Keywords:** anthropological, language, ethnical, researched.

The Danube is a natural boundary and hence a language boundary. It is a well-known fact that the end-part of the Danube is a boundary between two of the languages of the Balkan language union, spoken by a majority of native speakers. Unlike the rest of the Balkan languages, these two languages belong to different major language families. Bulgarian is a Slavonic language, whereas Romanian is a Roman language. A part from Bulgarians and Romanians, there live other ethnical communities in the lands near the end-part of the Danube such as Jewish, Greek, Gypsy, Ukrainian, Turkish, Albanian, Greeks, Russians, Tatars and the group of the Gagauz, as well. Of course, there is diversity concerning denominations that are represented by Orthodox, Catholics, Jews, Muslim, Protestants, etc. In the contact area there are important phenomena and processes, concerning the boundary area, emphasizing the common features of the Balkan area, as well as specific features of each of the languages.

This paper, which is part of a larger research on the Balkan anthroponomy, analyses interesting and specific material, typical of this geographical region that is regionally marked and has ambivalent semantic meaning. These are family names, formed by urbonyms. On the one hand, they quite naturally signalize the specific regional belonging, and on the other, they show the link with the common area: the

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Danube river, namely. We mean family names of the type: *Vidinliev, Kalafatov, Svishtovliev, Ruschukliev, Kalarashev, Tutrakanov*, (meaning ‘from Vidin’, ‘from Kalafat’, ‘from Svishtov’, ‘from Russe’, ‘from Kalarash’, ‘from Tutrakan’). This phenomenon is popular on both banks of the river. However, we shall focus on the data from Bulgarian that are comparable to data from Romanian. The data used here has been based on the onomasticons of Stefan Ilchev (Ilchev 1969), and Nikolai Kovachev (Kovachev 1987, 1995), Yordan Zaimov (Zaimov 1988), as well as on more specialized research of Ludwig Selimski (Selimski 1999) as well as on terrain research by the author of the present paper (Koleva 2001: 150-154).

(As a kind of language superstrat) anthroponymy lexis gives us information not only of the language situation, but also data of the ethnolinguistics and cultural anthropology. This approach to research is a new and productive one. Phenomena could be stratified and their areal characteristics could be delineated, based on the terrain data.

The choice of the present topic is related to the discourse of the language concepts, that are source of rich information as they reflect the age, environment and culture. The hydronym *Danube* could be regarded in that aspect not just because its contextual polysemy. First of all, this hydronym is widely-known in various phonetic variants, including Indoeuropean languages that have nothing to do with its ethymological source. This fact is due to the universality of its semantic meaning of ‘river’ that appeals to multiple meanings and uses, a wide derivation network and a high frequency (BER 1: 446-447; Fasmer 1: 552-553). Within the context of Bulgarian the Danube is a key word in collocoations (parhemes) comprising the idea of a large space, being a boundary. For example the colloquial expression *Власите на края на Дунава се давят // Накрай Дунава власите се давят* (*The Vlachs get drowned when they have almost reached the opposite bank of the Danube*) ‘for a person who loses, fails in the final stage of some work’ (РБЕ 2: 263), and the dialect expression: *Не може ме опра ни Дунав* (*The Danube cannot wash me*) ‘В много тежко състояние съм, не може да ми се помогне’ (to be in a difficult situation) (ФРБЕ 1: 709).

In Prilep, which is in the south-west, the collocation ‘*туна и сѝва*’ (*tuch*, a great deal of) is used. Its source is the Turkish name of the Danube: *Tuna* and the hydronym *Sava*. In Macedonia where there are big rivers, the collocation ‘*дунав вода*’ (*Danube water*) means ‘a lot of water, usually after heavy rainfalls or floods’ (Embore, the Lerin region).

One of the most often used derivatives built from *Danube* is the dialect geographical term ‘*дунавец*’ (*danuber*, meaning northern wind) (Totleben, in the region of Pleven; Koprivec, the region of Belene; Radanovo, the region of Turnovo; Targovishte).

In literary language the words *дунавец* (*danuber*) *дунавец* and *дунавка* (*a woman from the region of Danube*) are appellatives for persons, born or living near the Danube (РБЕ 4: 477).

There exist exotic male personal names such as *Дунав* (*meaning Danube*), registered for the first time in the XV century (Zaimov1988: 99) and *Дунѝй*

(*Dunai*) under a Russian influence (Kovachev 1995: 194). There are more diverse female personal names *Дунава* (*Dunava*), known since the XVIII century, common in the south-western regions (Kichevo, Deber), the new name *Дунàвия* (*Dunavia*) (Kovachev 1995: 194), known also as a brand of cheese (chrematonym) and a diminutive *Дунàвка* // *Дунавка* (*Dunavka*).

The family name *Dunavski* ‘someone, coming from the region of the Danube’ is well-known.

For onomastics in an European context, derivation of anthroponyms from urbonyms has a transparent semantics, because the phenomenon is quite common and its continuity could be regarded as a language universal. This phenomenon is not only a sign of an obsolete archaic language but it can also be regarded as a code for belonging to a particular civilization or culture, whose bearers show it consciously through their name, no matter what their language, ethnic or denominational community is. A fact that proves the above statement is that such types of family names are not only inherited. Like nick-names, they could appear in order to show a new status, related to the popularity and prestige of the territory. This socio-cultural phenomenon is quite topical on the boundary of two epochs, when the processes are quicker. In this respect, conclusions can be drawn both on diachronic and synchronic level, the second one being the contemporary period that could be studied in detail in many respects.

The end part of the Danube in its Bulgarian part is part of the Danube region, comprising the Danube plain and the land near the Danube. There are 34 municipalities in this area, united in the biggest regional union in the country, called ‘Danube’. The towns and villages along the river are 35. A great part of them are old, dating back to ancient times and the Middle ages, which is logical, having in mind the importance of the river in the past and nowadays. The favourable conditions near the Danube are the reason why there have been long-lasting migration processes, leading to ethnical and cultural diversity.

The important role of the river in the political, socio-economical and cultural development of Central and Eastern Europe has had an impact on the development of the towns and their urbanization. Like with the Black sea coastline, here the towns have had an important role. They are 11 in number today. They have an European look and atmosphere. Their development is sustainable. And the number and density of population is sustained. Their names have been known for many years outside the country. The bigger towns and cities such as Vidin, Lom, Svishtov, Russe, Silistra have had a key role in the modern history. To use sociological terms, this fact enhances their rating and makes them attractive and prestigious places for living.

The sociolinguistic markers *prestige* and *social status* can be explained through anthroponymy. In the third quarter of the XIX c., when these places were developing most intensively, there were more family names that ‘gave out’ the place where the inhabitants lived. Thus, we can make a map of the towns, cities and villages along the Danube: *Новосёлски* // *Новоселянски* < Ново село, Видинско (meaning New village); The following anthroponyms mean ‘one

coming from the town / city / village of: *Новосёлски* // *Новоселянски* < Ново село; *Видинско* (meaning New village); *Бдински*, *Видински*, *Видинлиев* < Видин; *Ломски*, *Ломлиев*, *Ломов* // *Ломев* < Лом; *Цибрански* // *Цибрянски* // *Цибренски*, *Цибров* // *Цибрев* < v. Долни and Горни Цибър; *Раховски* < Оряхово; *Острòвски* < v. Острòв; *Байка̀лски* (new) < v. Байкал; *Беленски* < Белене; *Свищòвлиев* < Свищов; *Русчуков*, *Русчуклиев*, *Русейски* < Русе; *Тутрака̀нов* < Тутракан; *Доростòлски* < Силистра.

This list including 24 family names, made of 12 urbonyms, gives multiple information.:

- The prevailing urbonyms are those of citizens (8). These towns have the greater part of the population in the Danube region. They are old places
- There is greater variability with family names, related with the biggest and most important places, economically and culturally, *Russe* as the biggest city near the Danube and *Lom* as the second in size and closer to the capital harbour, *Vidin*, an administrative and church centre in the past and nowadays.
- The villages of Novo selo, Dolni Cibar and Ostrov are among the biggest in the north-western region.
- The family names related to the cities with the greatest distance between them: Vidin and Silistra are composed not from their contemporary base but from their historical base. The discerning of these forms as „дунавски” (*dunavski*) is a matter of the level of knowledge. While the anthroponym *Bdinski* has a similar phonetic structure with a Celtic ethymon and some contemporary variants, the family name *Dorostòlski*, associated with the easternmost town on the Danube is not of Bulgarian origin and can be difficultly discerned, as the results of a questionnaire among young people show.
- The opposition *old ~ new* is transparent in the variants of the names of the biggest cities on the Danube: *Russe* and *Vidin*
- There is a common dialect marker of the appellative word-formative base of ‘-лия’ meaning ‘a citizen of ...’
- The variants of ‘-ски’ are territorially marked. They are typical of the northwestern anthroponymy area but are also common in the north-eastern area. The only urbonyms that do not yield family names with the above ending are Свищов (*Svishtov*) and Тутракан (*Tutrakan*).
- The most widely used suffixes–ов // -ев yield names in the old area of Mizia
- The emphatic variants are also territorially marked.
- The family name originating from the urbonym Oriahovo has an initial vocal elision
- Anthroponyms of salavonic origin dominate. The word formative element – ‘ан (-’ан) in the family name *Новоселянски* (*Novoselianski*) is a signal of the contact area between Bulgarian and Romanian.

A few more names can be added to this list of Bulgarian names, that show the influence from the left bank of the Danube: e.g. *Калафàтев* < Калафат (from *Kalafat*) < dialectal калафàт ‘който запълва, замазва зирките на лодка’ <

Grecian *καλαράτης* (someone who fills the holes of a boat); *Бекѐтов* < Бѐкет (from Beket); *Корѐбиев* < Корѐбия (from Korabia); *Каларѐшов* // *Каларѐшев* (from Kalarash) < *călăraș* ‘конник, куриер’ (from the Romanian ‘horseman’). This word-formative structure is traditional for Bulgarian.

The systemic character in language nomination is evident. The link ~ *family name* ~ *a big city място* is a fact, no matter on which bank of the river the city is situated. Rarely, though, the name of the place can be a source of a personal name: *Олтенка* (*Oltenka*) < romanian *olteancă* ‘a citizen of Oltenia’.

The anthroponyms in the contact area of the end-part of the Danube are polysemantic. They reflect unity concerning the type of nomination and, like any personalia, have connotations outside the linguistic discourse. That’s why they are not only evidence of the history of the language but also of its areal characteristics. Anthroponyms can be used as a basis for comparative, confrontative and interdisciplinary studies.

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