

I. **Lexical aspects** (references are being made only to sources of information other than DEX).

Miel, pl. *miei*, s. m. 1/“lamb (ev. only male) in the first months of life; up to its weaning (CADE); ram in the first months of life (Scriban); lamb (male) up to the age of two years (DA)” ; 2/“lamb’s fur” ; 3/“lamb’s meat”. II. (rare.) “the male offspring of animals other than sheep” (DA). Ex. : “Munții giucară ca berbecii oilor și dealurile ca *mieii oilor*” (= litt. *sheep lambs*, Coresi Ps. 321/5, cit. by DA); “Dacă te spurcă *mielul de oaie*” (= litt. *the lamb of the sheep*; Vilcea, Gorovei, p. 191); *mielul caprei* (= litt. *goat’s lamb*; Glosar din V. Jiului, s. DA). Anon. Carans. (p. 353): *mjèl* “agnus”.

Dialectal variants: *mel*, pl. *mei* (Banat, Oltenia, Moldova); *niel* (Moldova; but *miel* in Neamț!); *mnel* (Transylvania, N. -Oltenia). Aromanian: *n’el*, pl. *n’el’i* (Papahagi, D.², p. 923; he gives also the sense “nail spot”) *niel(u)*, pl. *nieli* (Capidan, Aromânii, p. 322). Megleno-Romanian: *niel* (Candrea-Densușianu 1100, p. 166); also *niâl* (Capidan, Megl. III, p. 210), (*m*)*niel* (Pușcariu, Wb. 1070, p. 92). Istro-Romanian *ml’e* (Pușcariu, Z. Rekonstr., p. 73).

Diminutives: *mieșor* (rare, DA); *mieluc*, -ă (N. -Trans., DA); *mieluş-ă*; *mieluşel* (Anon. Carans., p. 353: *mjèlushel* “agnellus”; DA: also *mieloşel*, *mierluşel*; *mieluşei* also “cheese pancakes” (R. “papanăși”), CADE, p. 772), *mieluşă* (also *mieluşăuă*, DA; Cioranescu, p. 520—1: also “combings”; Şăineanu, p. 398: also “clover”, in Oltenia); *mieluşită* (Candrea-Densușianu, l.c.); *mieluşor* (id.); *mieluş*, -ă (DA: rare; also “vaca domnului” = Lygaeus equestris, “a sort of chinch”). Ar.: *niluš*, -e, pl. -i, -e; *nilic* (Papahagi D.², p. 926). Mgl.-R. *niluš*, *neltšuc*, *niltšoc* (Capidan, Megl. III, p. 210); *nilušă* (Pascu, DEMR, p. 132—3).

Derivatives:

Miá, pl. *miéle* (I have heard also *miále*): 1/“female lamb”; 2/= *mioără*; 3/“young ewe”. Var.: *meá* (Tiktin, DRG, p. 974); *mieá*, *mneá* (Cihac I, p. 164); *mniá* (Candrea-Densușianu, l.c.); *miáuă* (regressively built from the sing. def. *miáua*, DA); *miálă* (from the pl. *miéle*; also “knuckle-bone, dib” = Rom. “arșică”, DA). Ar.: *nao* (Capidan, Rom. Nom., p. 280); *nauă* (id., Arom., p. 227); *n’éauă*, pl. *n’éále* (Papahagi, D.², p. 923). Dimin.: D.-R. *mieită*, pl. -e, *mieută* (obsolete, from *miá*, DA).

Mielámă “lot of lambs” (Banat, Candrea-Densușianu, l.c.); *mielár* “a shepherd who tends only lambs” (DA); *mielăreá*, pl. -ele “chaste tree (*Vitex agnus castus*)”; *mielăreásă*: fem. of *mielár*; *mielărie* “a fold only for lambs”; *mieleărîta*: 1/= *mieleăreásă*; 2/“lamb’s tick”; *mielută* (dim., reg: DA).

Miór, pl. -i “one to three years old lamb” (DA); *mioără*, pl. -e (rare. -i, DA); 1/“young ewe up to the age of three years; ewe which has never (or not yet) brought forth”; 2/(reg.) “doe, or she-goat up to the age of one year”; ex.: “A *ciută mioară*, / Pe bot gălbioară. . . (DA).

Var. : *mieór*, *mieoáră*, *meoáră*, *meioáră*, *mihoáră* (DA). Deriv. : *mioreá*, pl. *-ele* (DA; pl. also "liverwort = *Hepatica nobilis*", Borza, p. 83); *mioríță*, pl. *-e* (W. -Trans. also *miorúță*, DA; sense also "squill = *Scilla bifolia*", Borza, p. 157); *Spațiul Mioritic* (title of an essay of Lucian Blaga, inspired from the folk-lore poem "Miorița", object: the Carpathian space, with its artistical manifestations and conception of life and death); *mioárce* "ewes" (DA, from a poem of Tudor Arghezi); *mirioáră*, pl. *-e* (Banat, Pușcariu, Wb. 1093, p. 94). Ar. : *mil'iór*, *-oáră*; *mil'íur*, *-úră*, pl. *-i*, *-úre*; *ml'iór*, *mbl'iór*, *-oáră*; *n'l'iór*, *-oáră* : 1/ = *miór*, *-oáră*; 2/"young she-goat" (Papahagi D.² p. 798, 813, 926). Mgl.-R. : *miliúr* (Cioranescu, l.c.); *mil'ór*, *ml'ór* "lamb; one year old kid" (Pascu, DEMR, p. 132-3); *ml'oáră*, *mil'oáră* (Capidan, Megl. III, p. 189-90). In compounds : *strămiór*, *-oáră* "ram, ewe, from two to three years" (Sibiu : *strămníór*; Mehedinți : *strămnioáră*; Banat : *strămioáră*, Candrea-Densușianu 1101, p. 166). Ar. : *strănil'ór* (Candrea-Densușianu, l.c.; also *străml'ór*, pl. *-i*, Papahagi D.², p. 1120); *străml'oáră*, *stranl'oáră* "ewe from two to three years" (Capidan, Rom. Nom., p. 280).

Borrowed from the Romanian :

Albanian : *mel'óre* : 1/"young ram; young sheep of one to two years"; 2/"she-goat which has not yet brought forth" (last sense in Greece; Meyer, EWA, p. 278, also *milóre*); *mil'úr* "two years old lamb" (Hristoforidhi, p. 245); *miliúar*, *milór*, *-e* "two years old ram or ewe" (Cordignano).

New Greek (epir.) : $\mu\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\rho\iota$, $-\rho\alpha$, "young lamb" (Meyer, l.c.); $\mu\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\rho\alpha$ "three years old ewe" (Capidan, DR IV/1, p. 467 f.); $\mu\pi\lambda'\acute{o}\upsilon\rho$, $\mu\beta\lambda'\acute{o}\rho$, $\mu\eta\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\rho\iota$, $-\rho\alpha$ (cit. from diff. sources by Papahagi D.², p. 818).

Magyar : *millóra*, *mióra*, *mijóra* = Rom. *mioáră* (Candrea-Densușianu, l.c.).

II. Miel < Lat. Agnellus?

Up to the present, in spite of insuperable phonetic difficulties, most authors have considered quite normal the deriving of *miél* from Lat. *agnellus* (the other words being mere Rom-derivatives; but see the suffix *-úar*, *-úer*, *-òre* in Albanian!). As for the passing of *gn* to *m*, six theories have been advanced :

1. After the aphaeresis of *ag-* (something never heard of in Rom.!), *nellu-* > *miél* (Cihac, l.c.).

2. Pușcariu (Z. Rekonstar., l.c.), postulates an **agmëllus* (from a — most improbable! — "contamination" of *agnëllus* with *agmen* "herd; mob") > **aumëllus* > **aumiel* > **amiel* > *miél* (slightly modified in DR I, p. 424-5 : **agmëllus* > **aumëllu* > **(a)mëllu* > *miél*).

3. Considering that Lat. *gn* has always resulted in Romanian *mn* (*signum* > *semn*, *lignum* > *lemn*, etc), Candrea and Densușianu (1100, p. 166) thought *gné* changed to **mnié*, then to *mié(l)* through a "false regression", "because in those regions where **mniél* first became *miél*, people pronounced *miéu* "mine", corresponding to *mnéu* in other regions". A thesis accepted by Tiktin (DRG, p. 974, which gives as an ex. *dumitale* < *domniei tale*), by Meyer-Lübke (DR II, p. 2-3) and by Scriban (p. 794).

4. In his comments on a series of articles of Skok (DR I, p. 424-5), Pușcariu rejects as impossible the transformation *gn* > **mí* > *mié(l)*, arguing that in Banat the real spellings are *miél* and *mel*, although *ñ* < *ni*, *ne* is preserved in this region; he also gives up **agmëllus*. After accepting the etymology Lat. **ignitia* > D.-R. *miđăță* "fever" (Cod. Voron. *mniđăță* = *miđăță*, according to Pușcariu; Oaș, *mnăță*; Ar. *năță*), he favours now an evolution *gn* > **ηη* > **ηη* > *mi(él)* (two clusters almost impossible to spell!).

5. Pușcariu's last theory about *miél* (in *Limba Română* II, p. 385) admits *gne* > **mne* > **mie(l)* (accepted by Cioranescu, who thinks that the aphaeresis of *a* occurred first).

6. Rosetti (BL V, 33, also ILR, p. 130) shows that *gn* was pronounced *ññ* in Latin and thinks it changed to *ñ* then to *mi(él)*, the last stage being a recent one and caused by a "false regression" (see point 3.); in his opinion, Ar. and Mgl. R. *ñel* is an older stage (but why, again, should this be true only for *miél*, as an unique example of its kind?).

III. The origin of rom. *miél*

None of these theories are satisfactory. In his article "Z. Rekonstr." (l. c.), Pușcariu rightly says: "But the contemporary forms of *miél* are comparable to the results of Lat. *mēle* ('honey'): D.-R. *miél*: *miére* (*míel*: *míere*; *nel*: *nére*); Ar. *niel*: *niáre* (*niél*: *niári*); I. R. *ml'e* (< *ml'el*): *ml'are*...". These parallels are clear enough and make superfluous the demonstration that in D.-R., as in the South-Danubian dialects, *mel* was the older spelling, the forms with *mń-* or *ń-* being only regional and found also in other words beginning with or containing an etymological *me* or *mi*. Another strong argument is *mioárá*, Ar. *míl'ioárá*, borrowed with an *m-* in Alb., N. Gr. and Magy.; *míl'ioárá* itself is a derivative of **mel*, not of *mnel*, *ñel* or *miél* (s. also *mirioárá*, Banat). (Cf. also the doubts of Capidan, Aromânii, p. 332-3 and of Rosetti, ILR, p. 130). Rom. *miél* is not derived from Lat. *agnellus*.

In *Gramm. der Roman. Sprachen* (vol. I, Bonn 1856), F. Diez was very close to the true solution, in comparing *miél* to O. Gr. $\mu\tilde{\eta}\lambda\omicron\nu$ "sheep or goats; small cattle" (see Cihac, l.c., who rejects this theory, and Resmeriță, who writes: "*Miél*: Daco-Greek, from $\mu\tilde{\eta}\lambda\omicron\nu$ 'ram' !).

Miél is not from O. Gr. $\mu\tilde{\eta}\lambda\omicron\nu$, but both have the same I.-E. origin. The older sense of *miél* was "offspring, young animal" (s. the meaning "kid" for *miél* and "young she-goat; young doe" for *mioárá*). O. Gr. $\mu\tilde{\eta}\lambda\omicron\nu$ is related to the I.-E. radical **mēlo-*, **smēlo-* "kleineres Tier" (IEW, 724): O. Ir. *míl* "(small) animal", Dutch *maal* "young cow", Arm. *mal* "sheep; ram"; from **mōlo-*: O. Ch. Sl. *malτ* "small, little", Ukr. *mal'* f. (coll.) "young sheep", *matih* m. (coll.) "young lambs, kids" (Berneker II, p. 13-4); with an *s*-mobile: **smθlo-* (**smolo-* according to Onions, p. 837) > Got. *smals*, etc. "little, small, NHG *schmal*", esp. O. Isl. *smale* n. "small animals", De Vries (p. 591) also *smali* "small cattle" (s. N. Isl., Fär. *smali*, N. Norw., Sw. dial. *smale* > Lp. N. *smalla*, *smalts* "sheep"), O. Isl. *smalki* "trifle", also Lit. *smalū* "small animal", Let. *smalks* "thin, very small". De Vries sends also to **mēl-* (**smēl-*), "zermalmen, etc" (IEW 716-9) and to these radicals we may also relate O. Gr. $\mu\tilde{\iota}\lambda\alpha\tilde{\xi}$, -κος ($\mu\tilde{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\alpha\tilde{\xi}$) "young boy, lad" (Frisk II, p. 287) and Alb. *milák*, -q: 1/ "leveret"; 2/ "child up to the age of two years" (Fjalor, p. 315; Mann, Dict., p. 285; in Meyer, EWA, l.c., also *mil'ák*), ev. also Alb. *mijúsh* "stupidello" (Giordano, 278). The Alb. words are inherited (not so H. Mihăescu, p. 350, who thinks *milák* is from O. Gr. $\mu\tilde{\iota}\lambda\alpha\tilde{\xi}$). Here also D.-R. *melc*, Ar. *zmélciu* (Papahagi D.², p. 1302) "snail" (to **melθ-k*). A series of Iranian words seems to belong here: Sangl. -Iškašmi *mel*, *mēl* (Pahalina, p. 216; Morgenstierne III, p. 50), Ormuri *mēi*, *mai*, Yidgha-Munji *mūo*, all of them "sheep"; Y. -M. *mīya* "male oorial" (Morgenstierne, l.c.), Kurd. *mē* "sheep", *mēgal* "flock of sheep" (MacKenzie I, p. 54), *mer* "sheep" (Wahby and Edmonds, p. 90).

Romanian has a lot of animal names of Dacian origin: *bíră*, *bírcă* "ewe; sheep", *bíríéc* "male lamb" (see my article in DACOROMANIA 4, 1976), *baláur*, *bálă*, *bárzá*, *breb* (s. Mann, Die Urheimat, p. 227), *căpúșă*, *cîrlán*, *cióárá*, *ciócîrlíe*, *cotéi*, *daș*, *hútúre*, *mînz*, *melc*, *măgár*, *năpîrcă*, *púpáză*, *rátă*, *strépede*, *șopîrlă*, *viézure* (see I. I. Russu, *Elementele Autohtone* and C. Poghirc, *ILR-Ac. R. II* and *B. P. Hasdeu*). To this impressive series of appellatives we add now *miél* (also *miór*, *mioárá*), their Dacian origin being asserted by the existence of similar and related words in Albanian, Armenian and Old Greek.

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