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The Bulgarian-Romanian Language Boundary: Anthroponymical Data

This article, which is part of a larger research project on Balkan anthroponymy, analyses interesting and specific material, typical of this geographical region, material which is regionally marked and is semantically ambivalent. These are family names (surnames) formed on the basis of urbonyms. On the one hand, they quite naturally signal the specific regional belonging, and on the other, they show the link with the common area: the Danube river. We are referring to family names of the type: *Vidinliev*, *Kalafatov*, *Svishtovliev*, *Ruschukliev*, *Kalarashev*, *Tutrakanov*, (meaning ‘from Vidin’, ‘from Calafat’, ‘from Svishtov’, ‘from Ruse’, ‘from Calarashi’, ‘from Tutrakan’). This phenomenon is widespread 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 (Илчев, 1969, 2012) and Nikolai Kovachev (Ковачев, 1987, 1995), Yordan Zaimov (Заимов, 1988), as well as on more specialized research by Ludwig Selimski (Селимски, 2000, pp. 66–73) as well as on fieldwork carried out by the author of the present paper (Колева, 2001, pp. 150–154).

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The Danube is a natural boundary and hence a language boundary. It is a well-known fact that the lower reaches of the Danube form a boundary between two of the languages of the Balkan linguistic league (Sprachbund), spoken by a majority of native speakers. Unlike the rest of the Balkan languages, these two belong to different major language families. Bulgarian is a Slavonic language, whereas Romanian is a Romance language. Apart from Bulgarians and Romanians, other ethnic communities live in the lands near the lower reaches of the Danube, such as Jews, Greeks, Roma, Ukrainians, Turks, Albanians, Russians, Tatars and the Gagauz. Of course, there is also a diversity of religious faiths, which includes Orthodox, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Protestants, etc. In the contact area there are important phenomena and processes relating to the boundary area, emphasizing the common features of the Balkan area, as well as features specific to each of the languages.

As a kind of language superstratum, anthroponymical lexis gives us information not only about the language situation, but also data relating to ethnolinguistics and cultural anthropology. This approach to research is a new and productive one. Phenomena can be stratified and their areal characteristics can be delineated, based on the data collected in the field.

The choice of the present topic is related to discourse on language concepts, which are a rich source of information as they reflect the age, environment and culture of the speakers. The hydronym *Danube* could be seen in this light and not just because it displays contextual polysemy. First of all, this hydronym is widely-known in various phonetic variants, including Indo-European languages that have nothing to do with its etymological source. This is due to the universality of its semantic meaning of 'river', which appeals to multiple meanings and uses, a wide derivation network and a high frequency of use (*Български етимологичен речник*, 1971, pp. 446–447; Фасмер, 1986, pp. 552–553).

Within the context of Bulgarian, the Danube is a key word in collocations (phrasemes) comprising the idea of a large space, of 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 (*Речник на българския език*, 1979, p. 263), and the dialect expression: *Не може ме опра ни Дунав* ('В много тежко състояние съм, не може да ми се помогне') 'The Danube cannot wash me' – meaning 'to be in a difficult situation' (Ничева, Спасова-Михайлова, & Чолакова, 1974, p. 709).

In Prilep, which is in central Macedonia, the collocation *туна и сàва* ‘much, 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 rainfall or floods’ (Embores, Lerin region).

One of the most often used derivatives formed from *Danube* is the geographical term *дунавец* ‘Danube person’ i.e. ‘northern wind’ – in Totleben, in the region of Pleven; Koprivica, region of Belene; Radanovo, region of Turnovo; Targovishte.

In literary language the words *дунавец* ‘Danube person’ and *дунавка* ‘a woman from the region of the Danube’ are appellatives for persons born or living near the Danube (*Речник на българския език*, 1984, p. 477).

There exist exotic male given names such as *Дунав* (meaning ‘Danube’), registered for the first time in the 15th century (Займов, 1988, p. 99) and *Дунай* (*Dunai*) under Russian influence (Ковачев, 1995, p. 194). There are even more diverse female given names *Дунава* (*Dunava*), known since the 18th century, common in the south-western regions (Kichevo, Debăr).

The new name *Дунавия* (*Dunavia*) is also known as a brand of cheese (chrematonym) and a diminutive *Дунавка* // *Дунавка* (*Dunavka*); (Ковачев, 1995, p. 194).

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

For onomastics in a 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 the 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 religious community is. A fact that proves the above statement is that such types of family names are not only inherited. Like nicknames, they may surface in order to show a new status related to the popularity and prestige of the territory. This socio-cultural phenomenon is quite typical on the boundary of two epochs, when linguistic processes are quicker. In this respect, conclusions can be drawn both on the diachronic and synchronic level, the second being the contemporary period, which could be studied in detail in many respects.

The lower reaches of the Danube in Bulgaria 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 largest regional grouping in the country, called 'Danube'. The towns and villages along the river number 35. A large part of them are old, dating back to ancient times and the Middle Ages, which makes sense, bearing in mind the importance of the river in the past as well as today. The favourable conditions near the Danube are the reason why there have been long-lasting migration processes leading to ethnic and cultural diversity.

The important role of the river in the political, socio-economic and cultural development of Central and Eastern Europe has had an impact on the development of the towns and their urbanization. As with the Black-Sea coastline, the towns here have had an important role. There are eleven of them today. They have a European look and atmosphere. Their development is sustainable. And the number and density of the population is being sustained. Their names have been known for many years outside the country. The bigger towns and cities such as Vidin, Lom, Svishtov, Ruse and Silistra have had a key role in modern history. To use sociological terms, this fact enhances their popularity 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 19th century, when these places were developing most intensively, there were more family names that reflected the place where the inhabitants lived. Thus, we can make a map of the towns, cities and villages along the Danube: *Новоселски* // *Новоселянски* < Ново село (Novo selo), region of Vidin (meaning New Village).

The following anthroponyms mean 'one coming from the town / city / village of':

Новоселски [novosèlski] // *Новоселянски* [novosel'anski] < village of Ново село (Novo selo), region of Vidin,

Бдински [bdinski], *Видински* [vidinski], *Видинлиев* [vidinlief] // *Видинлиев* [vidinlief] < Видин (Vidin),

Ломски [lòmski], *Ломлиев* [lomlief], *Ломов* [lòmof] // *Ломев* [lòmef] < Лом (Lom),

Цибрански [cibrànski] // *Цибрянски* [cibr'anski] // *Цибренски*, [cìbrenski] *Цибров* [cibrof] // *Цибрев* [cibref] < village of Долни Цибър (Dolni Cibŭr) and the village of Горни Цибър (Gorni Cibŭr),

Раховски [ràhofski] < Оряхово (Oryahovo),

Островски [ostròfski] < village of Остров (Ostrov),
Байкалски [bajkàlski] (new) < village of Байкал (Baikal),
Беленски [bèlenski] < Белене (Belene),
Свищовлиев [svištovlièf] < Свищов (Svishtov),
Русчуков [rusčùkof], *Русчуклиев* [rusčuklièf], *Русейски* [rusèjski] < Русе (Ruse),
Тутраканов [tutrakànof] < Тутракан (Tutrakan),
Доростолски [dorostòlski] < Силистра (Silistra).

This list with 24 family names, made up from 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 relating to the biggest and most important places, economically and culturally, *Ruse* 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 today.

The villages of *Novo selo*, *Dolni Cibur* 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 form. The awareness of these forms such as *дунавски* (*dunavski*) depends on a degree of knowledge. While the anthroponym *Bdinski* has a similar phonetic structure to a Celtic ethymon and some contemporary variants, the family name *Dorostolski*, associated with the easternmost town on the Danube, is not of Bulgarian origin and can be interpreted only with difficulty, 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: *Ruse* and *Vidin*.

There is a common dialect marker of the appellative word-formative base of *-lija* meaning ‘a citizen of...’

The variants of *-ski* are territorially marked. They are typical of the north-western anthroponymical area but are also common in the north east. The only urbonyms that do not yield family names with the above ending are *Свищов* (Svishtov) and *Тутракан* (Tutrakan).

The most widely used suffixes *-ov* // *-ev* yield names in the old area of Moesia. The emphatic variants are also territorially marked.

The family name originating from the urbonym *Oryahovo* has an initial vocal elision.

Anthroponyms of Slavonic origin dominate. The word formative element **-an** in the family name *Новоселянски* (*Novoselyanski*) 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:

Калафатеv [kalafàtef] < Калафат (from Calafat) < dialectal калафат ‘който запълва, замазва зирките на лодка’ < Greek καλαφάτης ‘someone who fills the holes of a boat’,

Бекетов [bekètɔf] < Бекет (from Bechet),

Корабиеv [koràbief] < Корабия (from Corabia),

Каларашиов [kalaràšɔf] // *Каларашиев* [kalaràšef] (from Calarashi) < călărăș ‘конник, куриер’ (from the Romanian ‘horseman’). This morphological structure is traditional for Bulgarian.

The systemic character in language nomination is evident. The link ~ *family name* ~ *a big city* 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 given name: *Олтенка* [òltenka] < Romanian *olteancă* ‘a citizen of Oltenia’.

The anthroponyms in the contact area of the lower reaches of the Danube are polysemantic. They reflect unity in the type of nomination and, like any personalia, have connotations outside the linguistic discourse. That is 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, contrastive and interdisciplinary studies.

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Bŭlgarsko-rumuńska granica językowa. Dane antroponimiczne

Artykuł dotyczy bałkańskiej antroponimii w regionie dolnego Dunaju, stanowiącego bułgarsko-rumuńską granicę i jednocześnie strefę kontaktu. W tym regionie częste są nazwiska derywowane od nazw miejscowości. Sygnalizują one pochodzenie, wskazując jednocześnie na rodowód miejscowy, tj. z regionu naddunajskiego. Są to nazwiska takie jak:

Vidinliev, Kalafatov, Beketov, Svištovliev, Rusčukliev, Kalarašev, Tutrakanov (oznaczające: ‘z Vidinu, z Kalafatu, z Svištova, z Ruse, z Kalaraši, z Tutrakanu’). Zjawisko to występuje po obu stronach Dunaju.

Słowa kluczowe: język bułgarski; język rumuński; granica językowa; region Dunaju; strefa kontaktu; nazwy osobowe; słowotwórstwo

The Bulgarian-Romanian Language Boundary: Anthroponymical Data

The topic is Balkan anthroponymy. The area is the Lower Danube – the Bulgarian-Romanian language boundary. In this contact zone there is a distribution of family names, formed from urbonyms. They signal a specific regional belonging, and they show the link with the common area: the Danube river. We are referring to family names of the type: *Vidinliev, Kalafatov, Beketov, Svishtovliev, Ruschukliev, Kalarashev, Tutrakanov*, (meaning ‘from Vidin’, ‘from Calafat’, ‘from Bechet’, ‘from Svishtov’, ‘from Ruse’, ‘from Calarashi’, ‘from Tutrakan’). This phenomenon is widespread on both banks of the river.

Keywords: Bulgarian; Romanian; language boundary; the Danube area; contact zone; anthroponym; derivation

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