

GEO TOPONYMY IN THE NORTHERN PART OF DRĂGOIASA-GLODU-BILBOR-SECU-BORSEC-CORBU-TULGHEȘ DEPRESSION ALIGNMENT

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Abstract. This study represents a first approach regarding the geo toponymy of Drăgoiasa-Tulgheș depression alignment, a less known and less visible component of the Eastern Carpathians, that of small depressions, which involved an analysis of the theoretic aspects in regards to toponymy, but also involving my own studies, perceived and interpreted based on the field research. The study of the names of places found in this area was conducted from a geographic perspective, through geographic methods, which allowed me to classify or at least try to classify some toponyms and decipher their original meaning.

Key words: *small depressions, geo-morphonyms, hydronyms, oiconyms, econonyms*

1. Introduction

The approach used in this research is mainly based on a series of toponym-geographic categories and subcategories such as: *geo-morphonyms, hydronyms (potamonyms, telmatonyms, emergotoponyms), oiconyms, econonyms (hodonyms)*.

All the names of this space reflect a certain functionality, given in certain times and in geographic-historical circumstances.

Therefore, toponymy reflects man's connection with the environment, being an expression of the humanized geographic space (R. Crețan, 2000). Within Drăgoiasa-Tulgheș depression alignment, there are some unofficial toponyms that reflect the names of human settlements (Dâmbeni, Săcu, Pintec).

2. Work methodology

The aspects regarding the toponymy of this space are poorly known and studied, so in this endeavour two categories of methods have been used: *the inventory methods (gathering, registering) of toponyms* from maps, documents, historical sources, dictionaries, monographs and other published sources, as well as toponym gathering in the field; and *processing, interpretation and systematic study of the toponymic inventory methods*, resorting to the linguistic analysis method, as well as to geographic, historical, cartographic, information, comparative methods.

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Therefore, I used several toponym classification criteria, like: *nature of geographic elements, importance or size of the circulation area, linguistic structure and form, domain characterised by it, semantic content, formation, linguistic origin.*

3. Results and discussions

The first classification put forward in this article is based on a geographic criterion, the nature of geographic elements designated through toponyms. So, we have *names of units, elements and relief forms (geomorphonyms)*:

- *Vânăț Peak*, situated in the northern part of Glodu-Catrinari depression, is known by locals as Vânăț Hill (Livid Peak). Its name comes from the violet blue colour of the limestone;

There are many oronyms which refer to mountain shapes: "*măgură*" (*Măgura Peak*), name used to designate higher peaks, situated near mountain saddles, made of harder rocks (especially volcanic); "*obcină*", a term frequently used in Bucovina, but also in other regions, has several meanings, starting from the primary sense of community, common property, and ending with a geomorphological term, meaning limit, border, watershed or long mountain mane, that connects two peaks, or road on top of a mountain (I. Jordan, 1963, E. Petrovici, 1970, cited by I. Iosep, 2003).

The toponym of „*Obcina*” was also found in Căliman Mountains (*Obcina Peak*, west of Bilbor depression, in historical documents, and on maps, since their eastern part belonged to the border grounds of Câmpulung, and the relief forms named so correspond to the usual meaning of the word.

Consequently, „*Opcina Călimanului*” and „*Opcina cea mare*” (document from 1755) are actually well preserved segments of an old crater, acting as a watershed between Moldavian Bistrița and Mureș, as well as a natural limit between Ocolul Câmpulungului and Transilvania. In Giurgeu Mountains, we find a single toponym with the name *Obcina Peak*, at the springs of Rez and Putna, extremely suggestive as geographic denomination.

Another oronym referring to orographic shapes is that of "seș" (*Șesul Popii*), a flat tract of land, where, according to legend, the priest of Glodu sent his horses to graze, as many pastures could be found there; also found in Bistricioarei Mountains (*Șesul Comarnicului*).

For flat, swampy areas, the term "șeștină" is also used (*Șeștina, Șăștina Barasău*).

In order to express the concept of peak or isolated height, the term "*bâtcă*" is used (*Bâta Ciungilor, Bâta Mezeștilor, Bâta Arsurilor, Bâta Bisericii, Bâta Văcăriei, Bâta Bilborașului, Bâta Șeștinii, Bâta Răchitișului, Bâta Țândărașului, Bâta Rotundă*).

The term "*picior*" is also frequently used, being a name given to ridges that descend steadily from mountain peaks, but are separated by deep and paralel valleys (*Piciorul Gotca, Piciorul Bilborului, Piciorul Glodului, Piciorul Doboreanului, Piciorul Țiganilor, Piciorul Cușilor*).

Other oronyms refer to *mountain heights* (*Alunișul Mare, Alunișul Mic, Țibleșul Mare, Țibleșul Mic, Cheosrezu, Cheosrezu Mic, Asodul Mare, Fagul Înalt, Muncelu*); some to vegetation (*Aluniș, Păltiniș (Bilbor), Păltiniș (Tulgheș), Făget (Bilbor), Vf. Făget (Borsec), Făgetului Peak (Tulgheș), Făgețel (Tulgheș), Răchitiș, Ariniș, Șuvăriște* (mountain with dry grass called șuvar, thta grows on limestone); to *human activities* (*Straja, Văcăria, Piatra Lăptăriei, Vămanu, Harlagia*, a clearing high up the mountain, where shepherders gathered in summer and set up sheepdens), to *deforestations* (*Smida Vămanului, Runc, Runculeț, Arșița, Bâta Arsurilor, Corhana, Preluca, La Curătură, Preluca Mare, Poiana Mică, Poiana Mare, Secu Peak, Câmpul Bârsanului*).

Bolovăniș, Piatra Lăptăriei, Piatra Roșie (Red Rock - due to iron oxides), *Runcului Rock, Mocilor Rock* oronyms emphasize the rocky character of these peaks.

In terms of oronyms originating from *anthroponyms*, I would like to mention the following: *Mélik*, *Malnaş Peak*, *Bâtca lui Cociojdei*, *Bâtca Albului*, *Bâtca Mezoveştilor*, *Câmpul Bârsanului*, *Bâtca Irimeştilor*, *Bâtca Gicovanului*, *Vartolomenilor Hill*, *Fuştel's Hill*, *Bâtca lui Bondar*, *Dâmbul lui Şoric* (composed names).

Names of waterways (hydronyms), in the largest sense of the word, and more specifically *potamonyms*, which refer to names of rivers and streams. This category contains the following:

- *Neagra*, a quick mountain stream, with springs in Căliman Mountains, used as border reference during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, looked like a black thread when viewed from above;

- among the tributaries of this river, I point out *Tomnatec Stream*, its name deriving from the fact that it does to disappear in autumn, when the flows of many streams in the area are very low; *Cârligături*, name given due to its meanders; *Ciutacu*, *Ţupeni*, *Gavrileşti*, *Păştinăreşti streams*, bearing the names of local people from Glodu-Drăgoiasa area.

- *Bistricioara*, hydronym derived from Bistriţa, or from the Slavic root „Bistrîi”, with the addition of „oara”, designating a smaller waterway than Bistriţa, but one with a fast and turbulent flow;

- the tributaries of Bistricioara: *Lupului Stream*, name given after a hunter's nickname that used to live near the springs and hunted wolves, a name that also denotes the place's isolation; *Gicovanului Peak*, from the shepherd's name who crossed Bistricioara Mountains, towards Căliman, who was probably named Vicovanul; *Ruşilor Stream*, its name coming from a prisoner camp where Russian prisoners were held during First World War; *Lespezi Stream*, that comes from the large rocks through which this stream flows; *Stânilor Stream* - from the place where sheepdens are set up every spring; *Răcila Stream*, as in this area, with a northern exposure, snow melts slower, the stream's water being very cold; *Florilor Stream* - which flows through clearings filled with mountain flowers, especially during spring; *Ţiganilor Stream* - after the place of refuge of gypsies, as the people of Bilbor used to cast them out to prevent the spread of diseases; *Şeştina Stream* - a swampy area; Names of streams that clearly denote deforestation processes: *Valea Seacă Stream*, *Ciungilor Stream*, *Prisecani*, *Arşiţa*, *Secu Stream*, tributary of Topliţei; names of streams that came from landowners: *Dobreanu*, *Elena*, *Mândru*, *Ştefan's Stream*, *Grigore's Stream*, *Pascu's Stream*, *Geangalău*, *Marc*, or from vegetal associations (*Aluniş*, *Zmeuriş*, *Alunul*, *Făgeţel*, *Frasinul*).

The category of *telmatonyms* (swamp, bog names): *The Swamp of Bolovăniş*, *The Swamp of Ruşilor Stream*, *Dobreanu Swamp*, names from the streams that flow through that area, „Stăneştilor” swamp after some locals who own land nearby and *Hármasliget swamp*, after the name of a clearing; the category of *emergotonyms* (names of springs and wells) contains the names of mineral water springs: *Simion Lungu*, *Iacobet*, *Truţa*, *Raita*, *Vălcăneşti*, *László*, *Kossuth*, *Petőfi*, *Pierre Curie*, *Cibeni*, *Şandoreni*, *Deac*, from the names of local people with contributions to the restoration and conservation of these springs or from other famous people (*nobleman Lázár László*, *Pierre Curie*).

In terms of names of human settlements (*oiconyms*), when it comes to the origin of „*Borsec*”, we can accept the general view, supported by word tradition, that the sour waters of the area were named „*borviz*” in Hungarian, while this place bubbles („*bolboroseşte*”) on the surface, thus the name „*Borvisszék*” (the seat of mineral water).

From the shortening of this word, by eliminating „*viz*”, meaning water, which is inferred, the name „*Borszék*” (Borsec) was born. In *M. György's* paper regarding the settlements of Transilvania, it is recorded that in 1770, the place was named „*Acidulae Borszeg*”, followed in 1854 by *Borszek*, in 1900 *Gyergyó-Borszek*, and in 1913 *Băile Borsec*.

According to another version, the name of Borsec comes from the sour (wine-like) taste of the sparkling mineral waters, which also explains the name of the stream that flows through the area, that is Pârâul Vinului (Wine's Stream), gathering all tributaries, while the word *szék* (*seat*) came from the political-administrative organisations, known from the 15th century, as the seats of old courthouses (*sedes judiciaria*) of the local population (S. Călimănescu, A. Zaharia, 1981).

Finally, in the third version, the settlement's name comes from the Slavic word „*bor*”, meaning „*fir*”/„*pine tree*” and „*sec*” - *clearing*. Therefore, I consider the name Borsec as Slavic in origin (just like the name Bilbor) *Borsâgi*, which in time was adopted by the locals.

Borsec is considered by I. Iordan (1963) as derived from the Hungarian *bor*=*wine*, also being transcribed in Wine's Valley, the main collector of Borsec Depression.

In a surprising manner, the linguistic origin of both toponyms Borsec and Bilbor has never been tackled in a unitary way. I consider them as part of the same family, sharing „*bor*”.

Today, the Slavic etymology of Bilbor is well known, coming from *Bielbâr* (*Bielâi Bor*) meaning „*the place of the white fir*”, certifying the age of the name, placing it during the Slavic migrations, adopted by Romanians and later by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. This name can be explained by the presence of century old white fir forests, but also by the fact that the adjacent forests were covered in snow for long periods of time. Even though archeological discoveries are scarce, some toponyms lead to an ancient presence of our ancestors, just like the name of a mountain near Bilbor (The Fortress).

Even though most toponyms from Bilbor have Slavic origins (Bilbor, Răcila, Harlagia, Obcina, Iuteș), there are words with Latin origin, such as *Agestru* Stream (Latin *aggestum*).

In different documents, as well as in the Josephine maps of 1769-1773, one can find the name of *Belvor*, then *Belaboru* (Transylvania's Statistics of 1830 and 1850) or *Bélbor* (The Provincial Government's Bulletin for the Great Principality of Transylvania, 1854). This last name of Hungarian origin has been intensively disputed and countered.

In S. Opreanu's paper (1926), „Contributions to the Toponymy of Secuilor Land”, the origin of this name is Slavic (*bělŭ*), meaning white. According to I. Iordan (1963), Bilbor is considered synonymous to fir forest, or burnt fir forest, that grows again, this name having an archaic Slavic root: *bor-pin*, *borov-de pin*. According to popular tradition, the first name of the settlement was „*Satul lui Stan*” (*Stan's Village*) and not Bilbor.

In regards to the name of Corbu (raven), most consider it as part of a legend, in which Petru Rareș, passing with his troops through Bistricioarei Valley towards Lăzarea, seeing the fir forest „*black as a raven's feather*”, gave this settlement this name. Some claim that the name is Hungarian in origin, from „*Holló*” or raven, *Gyergyóholló*.

According to another legend, the settlement's name is derived from a Romanian sheperd, decapitated by Tartars, who was called Corbu, and whose „*head*” was abandoned in the village of Capu Corbului (Raven's Head).

On the Josephine maps of 1769-1773, there is the name *Pojana Korbuluj* (Poiana Corbului), a fact also mentioned by *Lipsky* who, in „*Repertorium locorum*” of 1808, refers to the existence of this settlement, bearing the name *Valea Corbului*. Around 1864, the villages priest Grigorie Coșiocariu declares that „*the village was named after the valley called Valea Corbului in Romanian*”.

Vasile Alecsandri, in his short story „*Borsec*” from 1854, mentioned Corbu, a settlement still bearing the name given by Petru Rareș. Orbán Balász, in his paper on Szeklers, stated that the two villages of Lower Corbu and Upper Corbu are made of scattered houses, with massive forests and picturesque landscapes.

Some Hungarian documents claim that Tulgheș was a settlement with a Hungarian majority, reason why the toponymy of the place and the adjacent hamlets is Hungarian, with

certain historical resonances, like the great Tartar invasion of 1241, that presumably followed the course of Bistricioara Valley, then through Țengheler Pass into Upper Mureș Valley.

This led to the Hungarian „tatárhágo”, meaning „the Tartar's climb”, from which the name of *Hagota* village derived.

Settlements named *Pintic*, and *Hagota* can also be found in Transilvania, near Gherla-Dej, having existed since the 13th century, in a Romanian area, suggesting the process of migration.

In Tulgheș there are many toponyms that can be traced back to the aforementioned event, such as „*Movila Tătarilor*”, „*Fântâna Tătarilor*”, „*Pârâul Tătaru*”, „*Vârful Tătarului*”, but the toponym *Tulgheș*, even if one might accept the origin „*tölgi*”, meaning „*oak*” (as there is a small patch of oak forest in the area), its etymology is somehow „forced”, as the first inhabitants of this settlements were Romanians, taking into account that around 1792, these places belonged to Moldova, the border following „the watershed”, thus proving the Romanian origin of the name, which comes from Geto-Dacian, a fact recently confirmed by historian and anthropologist Mariana Marcu from Bucharest, who showed the toponym *Tulgheș* as part of the archaic word fund, primarily meaning mountain pass. For example, we put forward the word „a (se) tolăni”, or „a (se) tologi” (to lie down).

Thus the derivations „*tulnic*” (a long instrument for blowing), as well as „*Tulnici*”, and „*Tulgheș*” (*Tulghies*), meaning long valley.

In Romanian, there is also the term „*toloagă*”, meaning uncultivated land, used for animal grazing. This might lead to *Tulgheș*, and could be a synonym for mountain valley, bounded by pastures.

All this proof contradicts what I. Iordan wrote in "Toponimia Românească, 1963", that the term comes from the Hungarian „*Tölgyes-tölgy*”, meaning „*oak*”, similarly to what O. C. Tăslăuanu claimed. „*Tulgheș*” comes from „*tulg-ă*” (*tolog*), and the word (an adjective) was formed with the addition of the suffix „*eș*”, like in: *Arhireș*, *Secăreș* (I. Șandru, 2000).

O. C. Tăslăuanu was wondering: „*How and when did the Slavs get here*”?, not knowing that, in the 6th and 7th centuries, the Slavs lived together with the Dacian-Roman population in the Eastern Carpathian area. This explains why a large part of the toponymy and hydronymy of this area is Slavic in origin (*Toplița* is a slav toponym, like *Bilbor*, *Drăgoiasa*, *Bistrița*, and *Bistricioara*, with the Romanian diminutive „*oara*”).

In the case of *Tulgheș*, O. C. Tăslăuanu was wrong, considering it Hungarian in origin, but everyone knows that the authorities from Budapest had tried, time and time again, to hungarise people's names, toponyms and hydronyms across Transilvania.

In *Tulgheș* for example, *Marc's Stream* became *Markpotok*, *Diacului Stream* became *Deakpotok*, *Cibenilor Stream* - *Cibipotok*, and so on, with the exception of some toponyms for which Hungarian equivalents could not be found, such as: *Comarnic*, *Bâtca*, *Măgura*, *Poiana*, *Putna*, *Prisecani*, etc.

The name of *Glodu* comes from a legend that says that near the church there was a large puddle of mud, sought after by wild boars and European bison. The legend also says that Stephen The Great used to come here to hunt for bison, being delighted by the local ospitality and hard work.

The past existence of bison in the area was confirmed by two forestry workers, who discovered a bison skeleton, in 1868-1870, in Livid Hill, a fact overlooked at that time.

The toponym of *Glodu* also has geological and geomorphological meanings, through the sediments of Superior Cretaceous-Eocene age, predominantly marl and clay, that occupies a synclinal inflexion of the crystalline base, determined partially by the poor water infiltration and the formation of high humidity bahn, and by the plasticity and gravitational mobility of these deposits on the slopes (I. Iosep, D. Paulencu, 1987).

The toponyms *Dâmbeni* and *Catrinari* originate from anthroponyms. The locals use the name *Dâmbeni* more frequently, because that village has many families bearing the name *Dâmbu* and only a few *Acatrinei*. However, officially, the old name as well as the current name of the village is *Catrinari*.

The name of *Drăgoiasa* is extremely old. According to legend, a shepherd named *Drăgoi* came to this land with his herd. As he fell in love with the place, he decided to stay, naming the place *Drăgoiasa*.

The etymology of the name *Secu* comes from a derived form of the toponym *Săcui*, leading us to think about the process of tree peeling („*săcuire*”), no longer employed today.

This process involved peeling the tree and creating a 10-15 cm wide ring around the tree, which led to the death of the tree. The tree's drying was also achieved by searing the forest, thus achieving a clearing.

Another argument is the fact that the inhabitants of Bilbor use the name „*Săcu*” and not *Secu*. Currently, this locality is mentioned bilingually, also known as *Székpaták*.

According to the aforementioned information, we tend to exclude the hypothesis that the name originates from the name of the Szekler population.

We can also mention *hodonoms*, which implies names of street, boulevards and roads (*Fundoaia* - defined as cul-de-sac, dead end, *Suseni* - upper part of Bilbor, *Joseni* - lower part of Bilbor, the main access area, *7 Springs Boulevard* - situated at the junction of several mineral water springs, *Poiana Veche* - place that implies one of the oldest economic activities of the area, logging).

Conclusions

By analysing the old Austro-Hungarian maps of 1894 and the Romanian maps of 1936, one can see that most toponyms and hydronyms are Romanian. Therefore, I can mention mountain names such as: *Bâtca Cupelor*, *Dealul Rotund*, *Mândra*, *Fața Dealului*, *Dealul Stânei*, *Tauru*, *Mândra Piciorului Stream*, *Pârâul Lung*, *Corbului Valley*, *Mesteacănului Stream*, *Pârâul Adânc* and so on. The fact that the first designations are Romanian, certifies the continuous existence of Romanians in this area, due to the main resource –*mineral waters*, as well as the favourable geographic position at the junction of many roads and paths connecting Moldova and Transilvania.

In conclusion, the toponymy of this microregion is mostly Romanian, with different origins (Latin, Slavic). No matter what the ethnic origins of these names are, one thing is certain: the natural characteristics have been favourable for population settlement ever since prestatal periods, at first as community hamlets, eventually evolving into villages.

Putna-Bistricioara cross corridor, through its geoeconomic and geodemographic bridge, accounts for the same material structures east and west of the corridor, and within it, for the 4th century coin hoard of Borsec. On the other hand, the more isolated geographic positions of *Secu*, *Bilbor*, *Drăgoiasa*, and *Glodu* depressions in relation to the main axis of the cross corridor and the higher degree of forest cover contributed to the continuity of the local population.

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