

ALT-CELTISCHER SPRACHSCHATZ:
THE UKRAINIAN CONTRIBUTION

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0. Introduction

The Celtic presence in the territory of what is now the Ukraine has been studied from different standpoints. The most considerable results have been achieved by archaeologists. Since the first finds of La Tène artefacts as early as 1844 much has been unearthed from Ukrainian soil that proves that the western parts of the country were indeed inhabited by Celtic tribes. As archaeologists maintain, the earliest indications of Celtic material in Transcarpathia can be traced to the fifth-fourth centuries BC. The penetration of the Celts themselves in the area, however, begins only in the later part of the third century. The Celtic presence further east is reflected by the archaeological finds; see a useful summary by V. Bidzilja and M. Schukin (Bidzilja & Schukin 1993: 67-84, 68 (map)). Some views have been expressed that the Celtic influence can be traced in the so-called “La Ténised” archaeological cultures spread as far as the Dnieper.¹

1. The linguistic aspects of Celtic presence in the Ukraine

The linguistic aspects of the Celtic presence in the Ukraine have also been considered. For obvious reasons it is not a matter of searching for borrowings from Celtic directly into Ukrainian. No inscriptions of Roman date which could contain Celtic place- or personal names are found in the area; and the ancient authors do not offer much information on the onomastic landscape of the region. Therefore, a linguistic study of Celtic presence in the area is confined to the analysis of toponymy, both ancient and modern. Sometimes existing linguistic attributions and etymological interpretations of the place-names are clearly naïve: for example, it is difficult to agree with some scholars who maintain that a Celtic tribal name *Belgae* is reflected in a Ukrainian place-name *Belz*.² More interesting and thought-provoking observations have been made, of course. There is

¹ See e.g., Eremenko 1997; for a different view see Maximov 1999, Pachkova 2004.

² See particularly Strizhak 1998: 73-74. For the Slavic attribution of the place-name see e.g. Neroznak 1983: 35-36.

no doubt, for example, that the place-name Καρρόδουνον attested in Ptolemy's *Geography* (III, 6, 15) is Celtic.³ There are certain problems, however, with its localisation. Ptolemy lists it alongside some other settlements on the Tyras (Dniester), and there are no attestations of this place-name in other sources. Ptolemy does supply this entry with grid references (49° 30' / 48° 40'), and this led to its identification with modern Kamenets-Podolskij in the Ukraine⁴. Most recently, however, it has been associated with a settlement Sokol located on the left bank of the Dniester to the south of Kamenets-Podolskij, one of the two sites in the area where the traces of Poienesti-Lukaševka archaeological culture are found.⁵

The Celticity of this particular place-name is transparent.⁶ There are more difficult cases, however. For example, the late O. Trubachov suggested that the river-names *Туня* (ТЪНЯ), *Тня* (ТНЯ) and perhaps also *Otavín* might be Celtic in origin. Having ruled out other linguistic attributions,⁷ he refers to a mountain-name *Taunum* in Germania which he believes is Celtic. The name is in fact *Taunus* (Mela *Chor.* III.3.30; cf. *Tauno* Tacitus *Ann.* I.56, *Taunum* XII.28; *C. Tavnensivm* CIL XIII, 7064, *Tavnenses* 733), and may indeed be Celtic.⁸ In view of the archaeological reports mentioned

³ Müller 1883: 434 (with a comment: "nomen est celticum").

⁴ See already Braun 1899: 207; for earlier identifications Kulakovskij 1899: 26 and Müller 1883: 434.

⁵ Zubarev 1999: 73; Zubarev 2005: 166-167. For the settlement, see Pachkova 1977. Earlier Zubarev (1998: 63) identified *Carrodunum* with a settlement Neslavča I. On the corresponding archaeological culture, see Babeş 1993 and a useful survey by Maximov (with Kasparova) 1993.

⁶ Similar place-names are well attested in ancient Europe: *Carrodunum* was the name of modern Krappitz, Kamburg, Pitomača, Hostýn (see Řehák & Květ 1993: 184), Karden (see Kuhn 1968: 326 and Greule & Kleiber 1999: 158), etc. *Carrodunum* is etymologically transparent, "Fort of Chariots"; for the place-name component *carro-* see Isaac 2004, Celtic Elements, s. v.; Anreiter 2001: 163; and Sims-Williams 2006: 60-61. Note that it is untenable to see in the first component a word for 'stone' and therefore to identify the Slavic name of the settlement on the Dniester *Kamenets* as a semantic parallel, as advocated by several scholars (e.g., Vasmer 1971: 265-266 and Trubachov 1991: 42).

⁷ Trubachov 1968: 210-211. See, however, Udolph 1979: 416 where the river-names are considered Slavic, to **тынь*, **туня* (cf. Old Church Slavonic *tina*). Udolph thinks that Trubachov's attempts to suggest non-Slavic etymology "vielleicht unnötig wird".

⁸ Interpreted as 'the worm off mountain' by De Bernardo Stempel 2005: 86-87; see Gohil 2005: 178 with complete bibliography. It should be noted that some scholars do not admit Celtic etymology for the oronym. If the etymology provided by P. de Bernardo Stempel is correct, the oronym notably contains a short *au*; the derivation (*tauno* < **tmno*) is not accepted by some linguists. The river name *Taunucus* (Modern *Le Tenu* in France) attested first in the seventh century formally may yield a better parallel.

above,⁹ the Celticity of the river-name(s) is admissible. The etymology of the allegedly Celtic river-name(s) in the Ukraine, however, may be different. One perhaps should consider here a set of hydronyms collected by X. Delamarre (2003: 293) in his *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise* s. v. *tauo-* < *tauso-* ‘silencieux, tranquille’. According to Delamarre, they should be compared with Irish *tó, tóe* ‘silencieux’, Welsh *taw* ‘silence’, to IE **taus-* with a subsequent loss of the intervocalic *-s-*. However, as Graham R. Isaac maintains, “derivation of *Taua* from **taus-* remains speculative, and no positive evidence can be adduced for it” (Isaac 2005: 204; cf. Isaac 2004: s.v. *Taouá p.e.*, comments on ‘Britannicae Insulae’). In this judgement he restricts himself to the Ptolomaic data of the British Isles; if the river-name on the eastern outskirts of the Celtic world is in fact Gaulish, there is a tiny possibility that it may belong here. There is some evidence, however, that intervocal *-s-* remains intact in the “eastern” Gaulish place-names, and it would be methodologically incorrect to claim a phonetic development of the sibilant which is different from what is normally found in Gaulish;¹⁰ a hypothesis of its loss in the process of adaptation poses even more questions than it attempts to answer. Further, Isaac mentions that the IE root **tā-* ‘flow’, sometimes considered in etymological analyses of the similar-looking river-names, is a ghost form; and draws attention to the root **teh₂-* ‘to thaw, to melt’. Isaac admits that there are many problems if Ptolomaic *Taouá* is to be compared with the river-name *Taw* (Old English *Táw*, Middle English *Tau*) in Devon, undeniably of Celtic origin: the protoform for the latter must contain a short initial *ǎ* which is inconsistent with the IE derivation.

Although Isaac admits that “the IE affiliation and Celticity of *Taoua* are doubtful”, the etymon he discussed may be well relevant for the analysis of the river-name in the Ukraine. If **Tāwā* is to be derived from **teh₂-u-eh₂-*, the most famous *Alauna* – from **h₂el-eu-n-eh₂-* (Isaac 2005: 190; for

⁹ See footnote 12 below. Note that presumably Celtic river-names (or “Illyrian” river-names in Celtic guises) in the Ukraine have been dated to the fourth millennia BC (!!!) by D. Telegin (1990: 53). The “Illyrian” question in archaeology has been dealt with extensively by H. Parzinger (1991); for the linguistic aspect of the same problem, see already Kronasser 1962. A (recent) balanced analysis of hydronyms in the Ukraine which have been considered “Illyrian” but which should be explained differently has been offered by I. Duridanov (1999: 102-106); for a criticism of Trubachov’s “Illyrian” hydronymic layer in the Ukraine, see Udolph 1979: 600-617. Cf. also Strizhak 1981: 31-65.

¹⁰ The point was advocated by the late V. P. Kalygin (2003: 87) in one of his last publications. On “lenition” *s- > h-* in Continental Celtic, see McCone 1996: 87-89.

a different view see Delamarre 2003: 37 and cf. Delamarre 2004: 126-7), *Tauna* may reflect **teh₂-u-n-eh₂-* (descriptive only), cf. Isaac's derivation of the river-name *Tina* from **tih₁-neh₂-*, with a synonymous PIE root **teih₁-* 'get hot', therefore 'melted, thawed river' (Isaac 2005: 205) (which may refer to the melting of snow?).

3. Conclusion

If the river-name in question is indeed Celtic in origin, and if we are to update Trubachov's analysis, this Celtic etymology may be tentatively considered. It should be noted, however, that not a single river-name of Celtic provenance has been securely attested in the territories of the "eastern Celts", be it the Balkans or North-Western Dacia.¹¹ It is also important that we have no reliable information on the ethnicity or/ and linguistic attribution of the people(s) the Celtic settlers in this area encountered. Thus if a Slavic etymology of the hydronym(s) is valid it will be perhaps safer to accept their Slavic origin than to contemplate an isolated example of a cluster of Celtic river-names, even if they are backed by archaeological evidence¹².

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SUMMARY

АЛЕКСАНДР ФАЛИЛЕЕВ

ALT-CELTISCHER SPRACHSCHATZ: УКРАИНСКИЙ ВКЛАД

В СТАТЬЕ ПЕРЕСМАТРИВАЕТСЯ ЭТИМОЛОГИЯ ТРЕХ ГИДРОНИМОВ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ УКРАИНЫ. ВСЕ ОНИ БЫЛИ В СВОЕ ВРЕМЯ ИДЕНТИФИЦИРОВАНЫ О. Н. ТРУБАЧЕВЫМ КАК КЕЛЬТСКИЕ. НЕСМОТРИ НА НАЛИЧИЕ ЭКСТРАЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИХ ФАКТОРОВ, В ЦЕЛОМ ПОЗВОЛЯЮЩИХ СООТНЕСТИ НАЗВАНИЯ РЕК С КЕЛЬТСКИМ (ГАЛЛЬСКИМ) ЯЗЫКОВЫМ СУБСТРАТОМ В РЕГИОНЕ, ИХ СЛЕДУЕТ РАССМАТРИВАТЬ КАК КЕЛЬТСКИЕ ЛИШЬ С ОПРЕДЕЛЕННОЙ ДОЛЕЙ ВЕРОЯТНОСТИ: НА ТЕРРИТОРИЯХ «ВОСТОЧНЫХ КЕЛЬТОВ» ПОЛНОСТЬЮ ОТСУТСТВУЮТ БЕЗУСЛОВНО ГАЛЛЬСКИЕ ГИДРОНИМЫ.

¹¹ See Falileyev 2005d: 296-302; Falileyev *fc.* It should be noted that some scholars admit a possibility of a Celtic provenance for the river-name *Oescus* (modern Iscăr in Bulgaria); see (most recently) Sims-Williams 2006: 258.

¹² For a direct association of this enclave of presumably Celtic (and "Illyrian") hydronyms (following Trubachov) and Celtic archaeological remnants in the area, see already Machinskij 1974: 38-40. I am grateful to Professor P. Sims-Williams for his comments on the earlier draft of this contribution.