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ONCE AGAIN ABOUT THE NAMES OF BULAESTI AND WOLOKA: SOME REFINEMENTS TO THE ISSUE OF ORIGIN OF BULAESTIAN UKRAINIANS

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Rezumat

Încă o dată despre toponimele Bulăiești și Voloka: noi detalii referitoare la originea ucrainenilor bulăieșteni

În prezentul articol sunt analizate noi argumente și idei cu referire la originea denumirii Bulăiești în contextul problemei originii ucrainenilor bulăieșteni. Un factor cheie îl constituie prezența cuvintelor dialectale moldovenești *bul'lai* și *bul'la*, care sunt evident legate de slavul „*bulava*” și respectiv pre-slavul **bula* – „umflătură; măciulie”. Este important că aceste lexeme sunt fixate în zona Prutului, în acea parte a Bucovinei, unde graiurile ucrainene întâlnesc cea mai apropiată înrudire cu cel bulăieștean, în aspecte lexicale și fonetice. Pe lângă aceasta, nu putem să omitem că aici de mai multe ori se întâlnește și un toponim important pentru regiunea Bulăiești precum este Voloka. Și anume în satul Voloka, raionul Vijnîțkii (inclusiv) a fost observat lexemul *bula*. Astfel, către unul și același areal, și anume arealul Prutului de Sus-Bucovina al graiurilor ucrainene suntem ghidați nu doar de caracteristicile lexicale și fonetice ale graiului bulăieștean, dar și de însăși toponimele Bulăiești și Voloka. Cel mai probabil, toate faptele analizate trebuie privite ca un argument important pentru afirmația că oiconimul Bulăiești și toponimul Voloka au apărut printre purtătorii graiului bulăieștean care au și adus tradiția toponimică respectivă din arealul graiurilor din Prutul de Sus-Bucovina în regiunea Codrilor Orheiului.

Cuvinte-cheie: istorie, toponimie, onomastică, graiuri ucrainene, Moldova medievală, Codrii Orheiului, Bucovina.

Резюме

Еще раз о топонимах Булэешть и Волока: новые штрихи к происхождению булаештских украинцев

В статье рассматриваются новые факты и идеи относительно происхождения названия Булэешть в контексте проблемы генезиса этнографической группы булаештских украинцев. Ключевым здесь является существование молдавских диалектных слов *bul'lai* и *bul'la*, которые очевидным образом связаны со славянским *булава*, и, соответственно, праславянским **bula* «гуля, набалдашник». Существенно, что указанные лексемы фиксируются в Попрутье, в той части Буковины, украинские говоры которой обнаруживают наибольшее родство с булаештским в лексическом и фонетическом отношении. Помимо того, нельзя не отметить, что здесь же, и неоднократно, фиксируется и такой весьма значимый топоним округа Булэешть, как Волока. И именно в селе Волока Вижницкого

района (в том числе) отмечена и лексема *bula*. Таким образом, к одному и тому же ареалу (ареалу надпрутско-буковинских украинских говоров) нас адресуют не только лексика и фонетические характеристики булаештского говора, но и сами топонимы Булэешть и Волока. По всей видимости, все представленные факты следует рассматривать как важный аргумент в пользу того, что и ойконим Булэешть, и топоним Волока возникли в среде именно носителей булаештского говора, которые и принесли соответствующую топонимическую традицию из ареала надпрутско-буковинских говоров в регион Орхейских Кодр.

Ключевые слова: история, топонимика, ономастика, украинские говоры, средневековая Молдова, Орхейские Кодры, Буковина.

Summary

Once again about the names of Bulaesti and Woloka: some refinements to the issue of origin of Bulaestian Ukrainians

The article considers some new facts and ideas concerning the origin of the toponym Bulaesti in the context of the issue on the origin of the Bulaestian Ukrainians ethnic group. The key fact is the existence of Moldavian dialectal words *bul'lai* and *bul'la*, which are evidently related with the Slavic *булава*, and, consequently pre-Slavic **bula* “bump, bulge; knob”. These words were found in the Prut river basin, in the area of those Ukrainian dialects that are closely related to Bulaestian dialect in the lexis and phonetics. In the same region, and in several times, we encounter another important toponym of the Bulaesti vicinity, *Woloka*. It is namely Woloka village (of Vijnitsa district) where the lexeme *bula* was found. Therefore, not only the lexis and phonetics of Bulaestian dialect points to the area of Pokutian-Bukovinian Ukrainian dialects, but the place names of *Bulaesti* and *Woloka* as well. Apparently, all considered in the article facts present important arguments to the idea that the names of *Bulaesti* and *Woloka* arose namely among Bulaestian dialect speakers, that brought this toponymic tradition from the area of Prut-Bukovinian Ukrainian dialects to the region of Orhei Kodry.

Key words: history, toponymy, onomastics, Ukrainian dialects, medieval Moldova, Orhei Kodry, Bukovina.

More than ten years ago, considering the issue of origin of the Ukrainians of Bulaesti village (Orhei district, Republic of Moldova), we suggested some ideas about the origin of Bulaesti village name [6, pp. 68-84], as well as in regards to some toponyms

of Bulaesti's neighbourhood, including a key one, *Woloka*/Волока (/Wo'лока/). In the next years, the reflections on this issue continued and some new facts were accumulated. Therefore, it is time, I think, to present some new considerations on the issue.

Let us start with a brief synthesis concerning the principal conclusions on the issue of the origin of Bulaesti's name.

The key question here is the origin of the anthroponym *Bulai*, from which, using a Romanian suffix, *-esti*, the oikonym *Bulaesti* derived. As we tried to demonstrate from the very beginning, two main hypothesis are possible here, the Slavic and the Turkic ones. The specific of the issue of Bulaesti oikonym's origin consists of the equal probability of both hypotheses.

Indeed, P. Chuchka suggested some arguments to the idea of the Slavic origin of this name, *Bulai* [7, pp. 96-97]. According to him, this name, *Bulai*, came from another ancient Slavic name, *Bula*, with the help of (Slavic also) anthroponymic suffix *-ай*. *Bula*, in turn, is a hypocoristic form of Slavic names Budislav, Budimir, Bulimir. For example, he pointed out to some Serbian (as well as Croatian) male names, Bule, Bula, Bulo [7, p. 97]. The surname *Bulai* (which derived from *Bulai* as a first name) is very popular in Belorussia [5, p. 79].

P. Chuchka had pointed out that we encounter such names as *Bulai*, *Bula*, and some other derivatives from *Bula*, in the Trans-Carpathian region as well.

The origin of the Bulaestian Ukrainian dialect and, consequently, the origin of the Bulaestian Ukrainians as well, is evidently related to the Carpathian area of Ukrainian dialects. The closely related to Bulaestian dialect are the Pocutian-Bucovinian and Hutsulian ones; very important specific analogies of Bulaestian dialect we see in the areas of some other Carpathian Ukrainian dialects, including the Trans-Carpathian one [10, pp. 341-342, note 8]). Thus, this gives us good reasons to prefer the Slavic version of the origin of the name *Bulai*.

However, the name *Bulai* is common among Turkic peoples (such as Kasimov Tatars and Balkarians, for example) also. For the Belorussian area this name, *Bulai*, is considered to be of Turkic origin also (I doubt if it is really so, as this (sur)name is popular in Belorussia, while among the Turkic peoples it is rare, as I can see); in the Ukrainian area it is mainly encountered in the regions that border the steppe areas.

At the same time, we have good reasons to consider some Turkic, post-Golden Horde influences in the area of the Bulaesti village during the Early Mol-

davian period [5, pp. 344-345]. The Bulaesti village is situated in the former rural district of a Golden Horde town, Shekhr al Djedid (later, an Early Moldavian town appeared in the same place, (Old) Orhei); the closest neighbouring (Moldavian) villages are Mirzaci and Mirzesti, which evidently derived their names from the Golden Horde title *mirza*/*murza*.

Thus, in such a situation, it is quite difficult to choose one of these versions. Both are valid to the present moment.

However, there are some other facts that I have not considered before. These facts allow us to suggest another, the third version of Bulaesti's name origin. Based on the principle of priority of the closest spatial, temporal cultural and linguistic analogies, we have to prefer namely this version.

I have found these facts in the dictionary of Moldavian dialects ('Дикционар диалектал (Кувинте, сенсурь, форме). Вол. 1-5. Кишинэу, 1985-86') [1]. Let me present them here.

First, there is a Moldavian dialectal lexeme *bu'lai* (/бу'лай/, 'прэжинэ ла фынтынэ ку кумпэнэ' [1, p. 174], i.e. «well crane pole» (it is used as a counterweight, with a roundish thickening at the end opposite to the bucket)). Second, also the Moldavian dialectal *bu'la* (/бу'ла/ "бэц gros ку мэчукэ ла ун капэт, бытэ; мэчулие ла бытэ; огринжэ де попушой" [1, pp. 173-174]; it means "thick stick with a rounded thickening at the end; thickened rounded part of the baton; scraps of corn stalks").

These two lexemes are obviously related both semantically and by origin. It is quite clear that they are related to the Slavic булава "club, club with a rounded thickening at the end", and, subsequently, derive from pre-Slavic *bula "bump, bulge; knob" [2, p. 289]¹.

Let me emphasize that the Moldavian dialectal *bula* conserved more archaic, pre-Slavic variant of the word. None of the Ukrainian dialectal dictionaries I have used match this variant (as well as *bulai*); this does not exclude the possibility, of course, that such variants, nevertheless, exist (existed) somewhere in the Ukrainian dialects.

Therefore, looking for the origin of the name *Bulai* (from which the name of Bulaesti derived) we now have no need to address either the more distant Slavic, or the Turkic groups, as the source root for this name existed in a more closer context. This is a mixed Romanian and Slavic (East Slavic) context, where a Romanian ethnic group assimilated a Slavic substrate in early enough times. This word could be used by the members of this mixed, East Slavic-Romanian environment as a nickname of a person; in the names of people, mentioned in the medieval

Moldavian land certificates (like *Jeremiah Bulai*, *Dumitru Bulai*, and others), *Bulai* is a nickname.

In the context, we are interested in, the area where these words were found is important. Namely, *bula* is mentioned in Woloka (previously Storoinets, now – Vijnitsa districts), Forostna and Dinautsi villages (Novoselitsa district) of Chernovtsy region of Ukraine, as well as in Tsetsina (now it is a suburb of Chernovtsy city), while the lexeme *bulai* was found in the Dinautsi village of Novoselitsa district. To make the situation clearer: Tsetsina is situated at the border with Kitsman and Zastavna districts; Forostna and Dinautsi are the neighboring villages (though, separated from each other by the Cherlena river valley), and are situated not far from Tsetsina; Woloka is close to the mentioned villages as well.

Thus, this is a quite small area in the Prut river basin, and namely those parts of Bukovina (and neighbouring territories), from which Ukrainian dialects come that demonstrate the greatest relationship with the Bulaestian one in lexis and phonetics. First of all, these are Kitsman, Zastavna and Gliboka districts, and then, in lesser degree, Novoselitsa, Storoinets and Vijnitsa districts.

Although, we should remember here that this area is a remnant, a relict of a larger area. Apparently, the formation of this dialectal area should be dated to the times when the so called Terra Shipintsy existed, which was included in the XIV century in the possession of the Moldavian Principality. Namely in the Terra Shipintsy, the area of Bukovinian (or Bucovinian-Prut, according to K. F. German and M. Bigusyak), the Ukrainian dialects appeared from which the Bulaestian Ukrainian one derived.

We could suppose that the lexeme *bulai* existed in the Moldavian dialects on a wider territory than that of the Moldavian villages of Bukovina. For instance, according to the information received from my colleague S. Bodean (he was born in Tsarigrad village, Drobia district of the Republic of Moldova, in 1975), there is a generic nickname *Bulai* in his native village. Nowadays, the meaning of this nickname is obscure for the villagers; this is a nickname of a group of families, who have a surname *Albu* (Moldavian/Romanian *Albu* means “white”; perhaps, it could be considered as a hint to the possible Ukrainian origin of this group of people). The *Albu* are village natives for many generations (as far as the villagers could remember); people from Korbul village of Donduseni district of the Republic of Moldova founded the Tsarigrad village, according to S. Bodean.

However, this example comes, as we see, from the northern part of the Republic of Moldova, which is territorially, as well as culturally related (even now-

adays) with Bukovina; in early times, the same Slavic dialectal groups inhabited both regions.

Besides, let me remind that one more *Bulaesti* (or *Bulaesti-Belzeni*) village (and the eponym of the village, *Jeremiah Bulai*) mentioned by medieval Moldavian land certificates, is placed far to the southwest from Bukovina, in the region of Byrlad plateau, Tutova district of Vaslui region, Romania [6, p. 68].

However, we have good reasons to assert that the Slavic (assimilated later by Romanians) population of Tutova region came during the Early Moldavian period (or even earlier) from Bukovina².

Thus, returning to the key question, we need to point out here that not only the lexical and phonetic features of Bulaestian Ukrainian dialect address us to the area of Bukovinian-Prut Ukrainian dialects. The search for the origin of Bulaesti village name directs us to the same region. This fact should be considered as a correlation of two independent parameters.

Besides, we have to mention that right in the same area, there exists another important toponym of Bulaesti village *Woloka*. As we remember, it was namely in the Woloka village of Storoinets (Vijnitsa) district that the lexeme *bula* was found.

Earlier we described in details the spectrum of our possibilities to explain the meaning and origin of the toponym *Woloka* [6, pp. 69-74, 89-91]. The best decision here is to reaffirm that the precise meaning of this toponym still needs further clarification. Although, in the first place, the options that come from the semantics of “field, arable land; deer forest tract; low wetland” are more preferable.

However, the Slavic etymology of this toponym is doubtless; this is a very important fact. In addition, probably it was (like in the case with *bulai* and *bula*) a rather early Slavic influence on a particular East Romanian group/groups in the same region of the Prut river basin in Bukovina.

In any case, although *Woloka* is rarely encountered (only six times according to medieval Moldavian land certificates of XIV – early XVII centuries A. D. [9, p. 281]) in more southern regions of former Moldavian Principality as well, it especially concentrates on a small limited area (near the Prut and Cheremosh rivers) in Bukovina [6, p. 79]. Thus, there are two toponyms *Woloka* in Gliboka district (*Woloka* village and a forested valley with the same name to the west of this village) and *Woloka* in Vijnitsa region, as well as *Zawoloka* village in Storoinets districts of Chernovtsy region of Ukraine.

In the more southern regions of the Moldavian Principality, the toponym *Woloka* is evidently associated with the areas of high density of Slavic (East Slavic) toponyms. We can suppose that *Woloka* ap-

peared in the south regions of the Moldavian Principality as a result of the migrations of some East Slavic groups (assimilated by Romanians later) from the north.

In this regard, it is noteworthy the existence of a Romanian dialectal lexeme *năvoloacă* (from the Ukrainian *наволок*), with the meaning «miriște în care se seamănă grâu de toamnă fără să se fi arat înainte; teren lăsat necultivat o perioadă» exists [8], which in English means: “stubble field in which winter wheat is sown without having been plowed before; land left uncultivated for a period”.

The semantics of this lexeme is important (which is evidently close to the assumed semantics of *Woloka* toponyms), as well as the fact that both in Romanian and Ukrainian languages there exists the variant *năvoloacă*/наволок with this meaning, and not a variant of *volocă*/волока.

Therefore, the toponym *Woloka* also points to the same area, the area of Bukovinian-Prut Ukrainian dialects. This is a third (but not the last) independent parameter.

I mean that besides *Woloka* there is one more toponym from Bulaesti village, which demonstrates a correlation with the mentioned above zone. This is *Kotelnik* (Bulaestian: Котэлнэк /Ко'телни'к/), the name of a district of Bulaesti village, and the name of the forest situated to the southeast from the village. This toponym evidently comes from *Котель/Kotel*; on the Prut river, near Chernovtsy exists *Котелев/Котелева* village (firstly mentioned in the XV century [9, p. 69]), which also comes from *Котель*. It is noteworthy that according to the Moldavian medieval land certificates both *Kotelnik* and *Woloka* are mentioned in the region of the modern village Hyrtopul Mare [9, p. 69], which is forty kilometers to the south from Bulaesti; *Woloka* is mentioned as a “forest in Kotelnik” [9, p. 281]). We should emphasize that *Котельник* is a rare toponym for the Romanian and Moldavian areas, and Hyrtopul Mare village is the only locus mentioned by the Moldavian medieval land certificates of XIV–XVII centuries A. D.

Thus, I think that all these facts apparently should be considered as a very important argument for the conclusion that these place names, *Bulaesti* and *Woloka*, appeared namely in the medium of Bulaestian dialect speakers, which brought this toponymical tradition to the region of Orhei Kodry³.

Note

¹ Let me emphasize that the stress in Moldavian dialectal word *bula* is on the second syllable: *bu|la*.

² Earlier we have pointed out that the surname *Bulai* exists in some more southern regions of the Republic of

Moldova, such as Stefan Voda district, for example [6, p. 81]. However, it remains questionable when and through which ways this surname appeared in these southern regions.

³ It is worth considering once again another important place name of Bulaesti village vicinity, Княж.

Княж (/Кн'аж/) is the name of the large forest between Bulaesti, Vyskautsi, and Susleni villages. People of neighbouring Moldavian villages name this forest *Кнеж/Кнеж* (Cnej). Therefore, I suggested earlier that Bulaestian Княж does not derive from the Moldavian *Cnej* [5, pp. 341–342].

I proceeded from the fact that in the Bulaestian dialect do not exist such phonetic features as the shift of /e/ to /a/ sounds (this feature could explain the form /Кн'аж/ from Кнеж), which is common for such (closely related to Bulaestian) Ukrainian dialects as Hutsulian and Pokutian-Bukovinian ones. This is evidently so, despite the existence of some sporadic exclusions in the Bulaestian dialect [10, p. 80], that demonstrate the shift of /e/ to /a/ (such as /y'ч'аpa/ ‘yesterday’, /ko'ч'аpa/ ‘fire iron’), as well as of /a/ to /e/, /i/ shift: /ko'ч'ило/ ‘stove ring’, /Гане За'ч'і'к'а/ ‘The Conception of Saint Anna’ Holiday’, /гил'етка/ ‘wine barrel’; an interesting question is presented here by some Bulaestian numerals, such as /д'ев'і'к'/, ‘nine’, /д'ес'і'к'/, ‘ten’, /од'е'на'ц'ык'/ ‘eleven’, /д'ва'на'ц'ык'/, ‘twelve’, /п'ят'на'ц'ык'/, ‘fifteen’, /д'э'в'і'т'на'ц'ык'/, ‘nineteen’, /д'ва'ц'ык'/ ‘twenty’ (for the recent discussion of the issue of continuants of pre-Slavic nasal *ǣ in Ukrainian dialects see: [3, pp. 86–95]).

However, there is an important (and significantly underestimated by me earlier) fact. I mean that the neighbouring Moldavian village, *Sherkani/Шеркань* is named by Bulaestians as *Шарканэ/Шар'кани'*, i.e., it demonstrates the shift of /e/ to /a/ sounds.

Well, the mentioned above exceptions could be explained based on the contacts (and, consequently, as the lexical borrowings only) of Bulaestians with some other Ukrainian dialects that were characterized by this phonetic feature, the shift of /e/ to /a/. However, the variant /Шар'кани'/ is impossible to explain, otherwise but concluding that the Bulaestian dialect knew the shift of /e/ to /a/ sounds in the times when this people came to the region of Orhei Kodry; and later it lost this phonetic feature under the influence of some new groups of Ukrainian migrants (see: [4]).

Thus, this explanation answers the question of the origin of Bulaestian Княж. Accordingly, the same explanation can be applied to the origin of the Moldavian *Cnej*.

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