

Dan Dana, *Onomasticon Thracicum. Répertoire des noms indigènes de Thrace, Macédoine Orientale, Mésies, Dacie et Bithynie*, De Boccard, Athènes, 2014, 624 p.
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Not long ago, the reputable Indo-Europeanist Don Ringe tackled the problem of linguistic diversity in prehistoric Europe in a guest post on *Language Log*. He argued convincingly, expanding on Johanna Nichols' revolutionary findings, that linguistic diversity in pre-state societies depends on the scale of the economy and thus correlates with geography.¹ The evidence consists of what we know of the pre-state societies of today, but also of the ancient Mediterranean in the second and the first millennium BC, where dozens of different and often unrelated languages were spoken and sometimes also written along the indented coasts, on islands, or in the mountainous interior. Many of these languages were demonstrably not Indo-European.² However, when it comes to the ancient barbarians of the north, a contrasting view has been widely held among classicists, one that outlines communities speaking relatively uniform Indo-European languages stretching over vast, contiguous territories, a view shared by ancient ethnography and 19th century worldviews alike. This is still the dominant trend in Thracian studies (Thracology), and the present book is the latest contribution to the field.

Dan Dana has maintained a resolute presence over the past decade, exploring the epigraphic record with diligence and putting forward a number of theories and views on the "indigenous" population of Southeastern Europe in antiquity. The present book is wrapped as an onomasticon, but nevertheless the author pays substantial attention to the mysterious language(s) of the Thracians, supposedly preserved by an abundant corpus of names scattered between the Atlantic and the Central Asia, from the age of Homer to late antiquity. As the small introduction puts it, "l'onomastique est le seul domaine qui permet d'améliorer nos connaissances sur la langue des Thraces" (p. xi). Dana's declared ambition is to supersede Dimiter Detschew's notorious and outdated *Die thrakischen Sprachreste*, and to redeem the ill-famed Thracian studies (p. cxix).

It is a monumental book, the fruit of years of sedulous work. At its very heart, it incorporates a prodigious catalogue of names (more than 1500!), drawn mainly but not solely from epigraphic sources. The volume is part of a homonymous project, still running at the

¹ NICHOLS 1990; RINGE 2009.

² CLACKSON 2015, 28. For another recent re-assessment see ANTHONY, RINGE 2015, 210: "If inscriptions were available from northern Europe at this time, say 700–200 BCE, we might find additional regions of surviving non-IE speech there, given the variety of non-IE languages in the well-documented Mediterranean. [...] IE languages must have spread [...] in a patchy, incident-inspired, opportunistic manner, leaving many 'islands' of non-IE languages."

time of this review as an online supplement.³ The catalogue is preceded by four chapters, functioning both as introduction and conclusion, and accompanied by various distribution maps, hypothetical Thracian lexemes and morphemes, and other comments on the entries.

The first chapter unfolds the history of research, presenting the previous attempts to catalogue and study the personal names and other linguistic relics linked to the Thracians. The narrative sets out in the 19th century, with the works of Wilhelm Tomaschek and Paul Kretschmer, and continues to examine the achievements of scholars and amateurs alike. The section devoted to Louis Robert is arguably the highlight of this chapter, though the high density of quotations may put off some readers. While undoubtedly informative, the exposition is uneven and overall unconvincing. Dana offers a sketchy portrait of each author, occasionally tainted with exaggerations and inconsistent appreciations. He scolds the Eastern European scholars for alleged nationalistic accents in their writings and separates them from the rest of the world (the “Occident”). The disparaging remarks target the linguists, found guilty of excessive use of etymologies. To give an example, Dana criticizes both Vladimir Georgiev (p. xxiv) and Ion Iosif Russu (p. xxviii) for their fanciful etymologies, and praises all the same Edgar Polomé for “une étude équilibrée” (p. xxxix)⁴. However, the Belgian-American linguist gives a summary of earlier findings, reproducing many of the etymologies and interpretations of Russu and Georgiev! At last, the presentation does not include notable linguists and philologists, despite their notable contributions. I have in mind Gustav Weigand, Norbert Jokl, Henrik Barić, Veselin Beševliev, Günter Reichenkron, Grigore Brâncuș, Vladimir Orel and Fred Woudhuizen.

The second chapter is an overview of the sources. It is clear that the author prefers the traditional, essentialist approach, depicting the Thracians as an ethnocultural group divided into numerous branches, displaying some cultural and dialectal variation (p. xliv).⁵ However, it was often argued that such ethnonyms are geographical terms, which do not identify single ethnic groups or languages.⁶

The first group of sources consists of inscriptions written in an unknown language claimed to be Thracian. Except for those from Zone and Samothrace, found in geographical proximity and dated to the same time frame,⁷ no text can be safely related to another or to the remaining of the reconstructed *Sprachreste*. To be sure, the text of the Kjolmen inscription

³ DANA 2014–2015.

⁴ POLOMÉ 1982, 876–888.

⁵ See CLACKSON 2015, 2–11 for a general criticism.

⁶ GRANINGER 2015, 28. For a similar perspective see MAYOR, COLARUSSO, SAUNDERS 2014, especially 450–451: “the Greeks thought of all the diverse tribes of the northern Black Sea, Caucasus and steppes as ‘Scythians’, much as Europeans used the term ‘Indians’ for New World tribes and employed ‘Africans’ as a collective noun”. The dichotomy between “Celts” and “natives” in the Balkans was questioned by DŽINO 2008.

⁷ BRIXHE 2006.

was also read in a variety of Phrygian⁸. Dana claims the Thracians had alphabets of their own, though he admits that “les lettres sont celles de l’alphabet grec.” (p. xlvi)

The literary and numismatic sources receive little attention. In contrast, a detailed survey of the epigraphic visibility of Thracians in space and time prompts a useful discussion about mobility and recruitment in the Hellenistic and Roman armies (pp. l-lvi). The section on Thracians in late antiquity is less consistent: compare, for instance, conflicting remarks such as “l’onomastique thrace est encore vivace” and “les noms féminins attestés sont rarissimes à cette époque” (p. lvii). The question of Albanian is tackled briefly and the author maintains a sound scepticism about the attempts to relate it to either Thracian or Illyrian. A final highlight of this chapter is the section dedicated to recent projects in progress, valuable for the study of onomastics and of the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean ancient history, as well.

The discussion of the third chapter is best postponed until we assess the actual evidence. Under the heading “Principles”, the fourth and the last chapter focuses on perceived difficulties and various minor issues, such as choosing between *Onomasticon Thracum* and *Thracicum* and finding a proper acronym for the book (p. cxv). Previous scholarly reflections are unfortunately ignored.⁹ What is in a Thracian name and how can it be distinguished from other names are, in my opinion, questions of crucial importance, considering the author collects data from the entire oikumene.

The catalogue of names

Most of the book is concerned with the presentation of data. The enormous list of names is structured alphabetically following the modern Latin alphabet (including W!), a questionable option considering that many names are written in the richer Greek alphabet. Transliterations render the sorting inconsistent at times and difficult to follow. Some names are introduced in unattested forms, including phonetic transcriptions, a decision that may seem arbitrary and unnecessary: see, for example, *βαστοζις (p. 27), Οαστοζις (p. 263), *Vastozis* (p. 383), **Wastozis* (p. 384) for the *hapax* Οαστοζεις.

The main entry of each name is presented in a condensed manner, which is very convenient once the reader gets used with the quirks and sporadic errors such as *Seleucia ad Tigrum* (sic!) (p. 380). It contains all the known forms: thus, under *Brizenus* we find *Brizanus*, *Brisenus*, *Brisanus*, Βριζενις etc. Different inflection paradigms may occasionally generate several such entries: *Suris*, *Surius* are listed separately from *Surus*, *Susas* from Σουσος, etc. The desinences are sometimes mistaken for derivational suffixes: *Buraido* is not a “variante de *Buraides*, avec un autre suffixe”(!) (p. 72). Many uncertain names, tagged with question marks, should have been included in a supplement instead. As a consequence, the quantitative

⁸ OREL 1995–1997.

⁹ For a remarkable study with solid methodology see STERN 2008. For the study of indigenous names see ZGUSTA 1965 with positive reception and further comments by ROBERT, ROBERT 1966, 350–351.

surveys come up with overestimated numbers, such as Annex I counting 1547 names. Few entries have distribution maps, visually elegant but of limited utility. There are only 51 maps in the entire volume and most of them have a regional focus. For instance, around half of the recorded occurrences of the name *Mucianus* are not shown in Figure 34 (p. 248). Moreover, the chronology is seldom considered, and some distributions may be therefore misleading.

The reading of inscriptions, ostraca, graffiti and coins is commendable and the emendations are quite convincing, the result of author's careful examination and also of his collaboration with other scholars. Still, I spotted a few minor lapses. On *I. Byz.* 370A = *ISM* II 165, the name is undoubtedly *Αυλοζανις*, with the same reverse Z as in *ζῆ*, and thus the *hapax* *Αυλοσανις* can be safely discarded (p. 19).¹⁰ The reading *Ποιμεζεγεος* on *IGB* III.1 1293 (p. 296) is dubious as there's not enough space between the two epsilons and a ligature is impossible due to their round shape. Detschew opted for *Ποιμεζεευος*,¹¹ but I believe the most probable reading is *Ποιμεζερεος* (*cf. zer-* on p. 391).

By contrast, the reading of literary sources is more problematic. Citing a famous passage on the Getae (*Hdt.* 4.94), Dana follows the unreliable and much-criticized edition of Haiim B. Rosén¹² and chooses *Βελέϊζις* (p. 406) instead of *Γεβελείζ(ε)ις*, the variant indicated by textual criticism and preferred by most other editors.¹³ In another comment, taking the *hapax* *Ζουρόβαρα* (*Ptol. Geog.* 3.8.9) as a reference, Dana emends *Ἄρκοβαράδα* to **Ἄρκόβαρα* (p. 410). It is not at all clear why the two toponyms must be related and the suggested solution seems implausible.¹⁴

The names are written down in nominative case whenever the author feels safe to reconstruct it and his judgement is generally sound. However, the genitives *Titi* on *AÉ* 2007, 1770 and *RMD* V 411 (p. 365), and *Deri* on *RMD* IV 317 (p. 130) should be restored to *Tit(i)us* and *Der(i)us* respectively. Having in mind inflections such as *Νεσβαις*, *Νεσβαι* and *Καις*, *Και*, documented in several inscriptions from Cilicia,¹⁵ I also suggest the nominatives *Δαρδιολαις* on *O. Claud.* II 402 and 403 (p. 112), *Διτουλαις* on *O. Claud.* II 402, if the separation is indeed correct (p. 142), and *Ναισουλαις* on *O. Claud.* II 404 and *inv.* 8362 (p. 258, *cf. Ναισουλις* on *O. Claud. inv.* 6361).

Most of the names are assigned to four onomastic stocks, to which I will return later: Thracian, Dacian or Daco-Moesian, Western Thracian, and Bithynian. A separate, but not

¹⁰ OLTEANU 2012.

¹¹ DETSCHEW 1957, 400.

¹² FEHLING 1989; RENEHAN 1991; WILSON 2015a, XII.

¹³ POGHIRC 1974, 358; DIMITROVA 2002, 224; WILSON 2015b, 83.

¹⁴ DANA, NEMETI 2012, 435: "enrichie par l'un des copistes avec une particule finale (δα)"(!)

¹⁵ TOMASCHITZ 1998, see the inscriptions nr. 7, 34, 36, 40, and 41. For this type of inflection which was inherited in modern Greek see BRIXHE 2002, 729; 2010, 237–238; HORROCKS 2010, 179–180.

always well-defined group are the pan-Thracian names, that is, names belonging to more onomastic stocks. The assignments and commentaries are, in many cases, disputable.

A most egregious example is *Mucianus*, listed here (together with *Muciana* and *Mucianilla*) as “nom d’assonance” (p. 246 *sqq*) and derived at the same time from a Thracian *muca*-(!) (p. 227). It is, first and foremost, a Latin name, notwithstanding its popularity among the inhabitants of Thrace. The selection of data is quite odd: we find a considerable number of non-Thracian *Muciani*, including, for example, Mutianus, a scholar and friend to Cassiodorus in Gothic Italy (Cassiod. *Inst.* 1.8 and 2.5), but not a whisper about the famous figures of *gens Mucia* such as Publius Licinius Crassus Mucianus and Gaius Licinius Mucianus.

Δρομιχαίτης (p. 165) is undoubtedly Greek, despite considerable efforts from modern exegetes to explain it otherwise. This epithet is documented and analysed in the commentaries of Eustathius of Thessalonica (Eust. *Il.* 1.222, *Il.* 2.796, *Od.* 1.363).¹⁶ It referred probably to a heroic hairstyle (cf. κάρη κομόωντας Ἀχαιοὺς in Hom. *Il.* 2.11, 28, 51, etc.), less popular among later Greeks, a fact that may also explain why its rare attestations. To be sure, there’s no reason to suspect the Athenian mercenary recorded in IG II² 1956, the general sent by Mithridates Eupator to assist Archelaus (App. *Mith.* 32 and 41) or Marcus Valerius Dromocheta(es) *sive* Calliparthenus (CIL VI 27991) were Thracians, let alone Dacians. The hypothesis of Detschew¹⁷ and Dana that Δρομιχαίτης translates a barbarian name is therefore unnecessary.

Thiadices (p. 363) is not a Dacian name, but the Greek Θεαδίκης (cf. Θεάφιλος on I. *Kalchedon* 7). Rustius Barbarus, the author of the Egyptian letter mentioning this cavalryman, writes regularly *i* for *e* in hiatus: *debio*, *habio*, *casium*, *lintiolo* (O. *Faw.* 2 = CEL I 74), *betacium*, *oliarium* (O. *Faw.* 3 = CEL I 75). Such spellings are more frequent in the first and second centuries AD and affect Greek names as well, cf. *Thiophilus*, *Thiophanes*, *Thiodotus* etc. in various contemporary Latin inscriptions.¹⁸

Most of the non-Thracian names fall into several categories. The theophoric Greek names Βενδιδώρα (pp. 30-31), Βενδιφάνης (p. 31) and Δηλόπτιχος (pp. 119-120)¹⁹ are no more Thracian than Ἰσίδωρος is Egyptian. *Lallnamen* such as Νάνα(ς) (p. 259), Πάπας (pp. 267-268), etc. are more popular in the Greek-speaking world outside Thrace, particularly in Asia Minor. Another group is that of ethnic names. Louis Robert made a compelling argument that “pour un homme libre, un anthroponyme tiré d’un ethnique ne manifeste point l’origine, mais une relation quelconque avec la ville ou le pays désigné par cet ethnique, voyage, commerce,

¹⁶ The word is included in a number of lexicons from Renaissance onwards such as SCAPULA 1579, col. 1789: *setas inter currentum agitans apud eundem*. On the semantics of this epithet see ZUCKER 2014. For χαίτη compounds referring to gods and men see, for example, *Anacreont.* 43.8. ἄβροχαίτας δ’ἄμα κοῦρος and 43.12: ὁ δ’Ἔρωσ ὁ χρυσοχαίτας.

¹⁷ DETSCHEW 1957, 159.

¹⁸ CUGUSI 1981, 743; 1996, 60; ADAMS 2013, 103-104. Cugusi also suggests an analogy with Θεαδίητος (P. *Oxy.* XII 1536), which, in my opinion, is just a version of the more popular Θεαίητος/Θεαίδητος.

¹⁹ On the cult of Bendis in the Greek world see JANOUCHOVÁ 2013.

etc.”²⁰ Dana cites this study (p. 380) but ignores its conclusion and implications. Other notable situations come from late antiquity, when the popularity of Thracian names waned. Κουτίλας, Γουδίλας and *Gudila* (pp. 100–101, 191) are variants of the same Gothic name.²¹ New names such as *Buraides*, attested no earlier than mid-late 4th century AD, are unlikely to be Thracian, in my opinion. Mobility, assimilation, but also epidemics and wars caused drastic changes in the ethnic and linguistic composition of the Balkans. Goths, Alans and Huns were the new Thracians alongside Roman provincials.

The Thracian origin is also doubtful for many *hapax legomena*: *Blicities* (p. 63), *Bulper* (p. 71), Σκεβλύας (p. 306), etc. Ταρουχίνας Χηπτουλη Γέτης, mentioned on a Thessalian epitaph (pp. 85, 349), does not have a unique Dacian name. Instead it must be connected to a name popular in northern Greece: Ταρουθίνας, Ταρουσίνας, Ταρουτινας, etc. (pp. 351–353). The names ending in –ζενίς are also interesting. The component is rather Thracian than pan-Thracian, since the vast majority of occurrences come from Hebrus valley (it’s a pity they were not placed on a map). Furthermore, they are all masculine names. Therefore *Muccasenia Fortunata ex Germania Superiore* (p. 234), commemorated in *CIL* XIII 1874, should not be listed as part of this group. As some scholars pointed out already, this name has a probable Celtic etymology²² and there are several analogies in the onomastics of Central Europe (cf. *Mocco*, *Mocca* in numerous inscriptions from Northern Italy and Noricum), but also in *deo Mercur(io) Mocco*, in a dedication from Germania Superior (*CIL* XIII 5676).

Blegissa/Blecissa is another name traditionally held to be Celtic²³ that becomes Dacian in this book, even though it is never attested in Dacia or Moesia (p. 63). Α Βλαικίσα mentioned in *O. Claud.* inv. 29 may or may not be related to it. Three generations are recorded in an epitaph from Solva in Noricum, not far from the border with Pannonia (*RIU Suppl.* 118): *Blecissa*, *Couco* and *Prosostus*. The latter two names occur in other Pannonian inscriptions, suggesting a local onomastic tradition. On another epitaph, near Savaria in Pannonia Superior (*RIU* I 141), the family of another *Blegissa* displays intriguing connections. His father’s name, *Buri(u)s* is common in Thrace (p. 72, and see also *AÉ* 2012, 1051, a funerary inscription from Augusta Vindelicorum set by *Burius civis Tracus* to his daughter *Burilla* and his son *Burinianus*), in Dalmatia and in the African provinces, but is conspicuously absent from the Daco-Moesian onomastics. His mother’s name, *Συνα[m]ίς*, is a *hapax*. The claim that it is “sans doute, un nom de la serie feminine dace Zu-“ (p. 337) lacks evidence. *Damanaeus* is indeed frequent among Dacians (p. 110) and raises some questions about Daco-Pannonian cultural interferences. His other brother’s name, *Disdosis*, (p. 154) has been already explained as a Dalmato-Pannonic

²⁰ ROBERT 1968, 419–420; TRACY, HABICHT 1991, 216.

²¹ See the prosopographic index in AMORY 1997, 379–380. For Goths referred as Thracians in the 6th century see also Procop. *Pers.* 2.30, *Goth.* 5.16, 6.13.

²² For **mokku-* in Proto-Celtic see MATASOVIĆ 2009, s.v.

²³ MEID 2005, 256.

name,²⁴ being attested as *Disdozi* in Egypt and Dalmatia and *Disdosi* in Moesia Inferior. Indeed, another Moesian inscription mentions Δεισδαζις, the father of Βατος (*IGB V 5328*). The latter is a *hapax* in Dana's corpus, but *Bato* is a quite popular name in Pannonia and Dalmatia.

In spite of all the aforementioned issues, a sizeable part of the inventory remains extremely valuable for the study of onomastics in these regions.

Transcriptions

Finally, the third chapter, "L'onomastique thrace", dealing mainly with names and languages, is, in many ways, the conclusion of the book. Its structure follows no apparent order: for example, the desinences are surprisingly listed among the "flottements graphiques" (p. xcvi). Many of the philological and linguistic commentaries are regrettably unreliable.

An important preliminary step in the analysis of the names is to understand how they were rendered into the languages of the inscriptions. There are splendid works on the transcription of Persian names into Greek,²⁵ or of Greek words into Latin,²⁶ which could have been put to good use. Moreover, the particularities of the Thracian names highlighted in this chapter are, for the most part, commonplace occurrences in Greek and Latin. Some examples will illustrate this point. The Greek voicing of σ before β, γ, δ and μ, as well as the reverse, hypercorrect process (pp. xcv, xcvi) are well-known²⁷ and copiously documented in epigraphic and literary sources (πρ[ε]ζβεύσαντα in *ISM III 122*, Λεζβία in *I. Kyme 37*, etc.) Furthermore, σδ and ζδ are sometimes spellings for ζ (δικαζδέτου instead of δικαζέτω in *SEG 37 494*). The so-called *di > z* evolution (p. xcvi) is common in Latin (*oze* for *hodie* in *CIL 8 8424*, *azutoribus* in *CIL 8 18224*, etc.),²⁸ and also a source of hyperurbanisms (*Sabadio* in *CIL 6 31164*).²⁹ At the same time, δ and ζ alternate before ι in Greek papyri, as the former became a dental fricative (Σαράπιζι in *SB 5 7992 = PSI 13 1332*, τραπεδίται in *P. Oxy. 20 2271*).³⁰ There is no ο > ι evolution(!) in Σπαρτοκος and *Sparticus* (pp. xcv, xcvi). The latter is better explained from *Spartacus*, through back-formation and derivation with the Latin suffix *-icus*. The stress on specific letters and sequences (pp. xcvi-xcvii) is also odd. *Qu* is simply the hypercorrect spelling of *cu* in *Doqui* and *Quelses* (cf. *nationis Daqus* in the inscription of *Dida Damanai* on p. 110). The ξ in Δάπυξ is the trivial result of morphology, while x in *Itaxa* is most likely a spelling for z (cf. *Ithazis* on p. 199).³¹

²⁴ MEID 2005, 267.

²⁵ SCHMITT 1976.

²⁶ BIVILLE 1990; 1995.

²⁷ SCHWYZER 1939, 217–218; BRIXHE 2010, 236.

²⁸ BIVILLE 1990, 129–135; ADAMS 2013, 118–123. See also the correct explanation for Dacian *Dierna/Tsierna* in ARDEVAN 1996, 245–246.

²⁹ HÄLMAGI 2014.

³⁰ GIGNAC 1976, 75–76; HORROCKS 2010, 170.

³¹ BIVILLE 1990, 129–130.

Etymologies

When the criteria explored above do not yield satisfactory results, the etymology is employed as a decisive tool to decide whether a name is Thracian and to assign it to one of the onomastic stocks. Despite his bitter scepticism, Dana is heavily indebted to other scholars, as he often follows Detschew, Georgiev, Russu or Duridanov to the letter. Their etymologies failed to gain wide acceptance, and their methods were often criticized and justly so:³² the investigation is restricted, for the most part, to inspectional similarities between names, an enterprise fraught with uncertainty.³³ In his notable study, Ladislav Zgusta remarked the striking resemblance between the Cilician Μονγόμερις and the British *Montgomery*,³⁴ which, of course, does not prove any relation between British onomastics and ancient Anatolia.

The first step in the etymological analysis is to separate the name into constitutive elements. According to Dana, these names are made up from one to three main elements (pp. lxxxv-lxxxvii) and a suffix may occasionally be added. The separation and identification of the components is often arbitrary, depending on what the scholar tries to prove. In a previous article,³⁵ Dana commented the name *Decinsada* (O. Ka. La. inv. 37), suggesting a Thracian *-sada*. The reading is now emended to *Decinsa Dax* (p. 118). The improvement is meritorious, but the tendency to find Thracian elements at all costs raises a serious question mark. These being said, the evidence for many onomastic elements is fragile. The Daco-Moesian *-gissa*, for example, can easily be read *-issa* (cf. Βαστιζα, *Dentubrisa*, etc.) and may also have a different origin.³⁶

The identification of components is accompanied by analogies. In many cases, the matches seem reasonable but the number of occurrences is low. Thus, a name attested on two non-contemporary inscriptions impels the author to find a “concentration”(!) (p. 275). Obviously, the shorter elements are prone to provide false positives: *goa-* (p. 190), *-la* (p. 200), *-nis* (p. 261), *thia-* (p. 362), *-zis* (p. 406), *zu-* (p. 408) etc. A more serious shortcoming is the inconsistency resulting from such analogies. Dana connects on one hand the Thracian *-πυρις* with the Dacian *-pier* (pp. lxxii, 271, 280), and on the other the Thracian *-para* with the Dacian *-bara* (p. 410).³⁷ Undoubtedly, some words have a more tumultuous history, but it's up to the

³² MASSON 1960; PISANI 1961; MESSING 1972; GAERTNER 2001; PANAYOTOU 2007, 743.

³³ Historical linguists have often leveled criticism at lexical approaches such as lexicostatistics and Joseph Greenberg's multilateral comparison. See, for example, CAMPBELL 1999, 314–315: “This approach stops where others begin, at the assembling of lexical similarities. These inspectional resemblances must be investigated to determine why they are similar, whether the similarity is due to inheritance from a common ancestor (the result of a distant genetic relationship) or to borrowing, accident, onomatopoeia, sound symbolism, nursery formations and the various things which we will consider in this chapter.”

³⁴ ZGUSTA 1965, 94–95 For chance resemblance and its impact on word by word comparisons see RINGE, ESKA 2013, 266–275.

³⁵ DANA 2003, 175.

³⁶ FLEURIOT 1991, 19–26; DE GOEDE 2014, 24–25, 52–53.

³⁷ Cf. DANA, NEMETI, 2012, 436: “avec un traitement différent de la labiale (sourde en thrace, sonore en dace)”.

author to explain how all the details fit into the bigger picture. In other cases, other explanations are more likely: for example, names such as *Bendina* and *Diurpina* contain the Latin *-inus* and not an otherwise undocumented Thracian suffix, inherited from PIE (p. lxxxix).

As it is customary in this field of work, the attribution of meanings is an exercise in imagination. Using a gloss mentioned by Hesychius and Photius, σκάρκη = ἀργύρια, Dana explains the feminine names Σκάρκη and Σκάρκεζαις through “trésor, chérie”(!) (pp. lxxxix, cx, 306). Much is made of the corrupted Dacian plant names extracted from the herbals of antiquity, but the analogies usually fall outside the reach of Daco-Moesian onomastics. The Dacian **dila* (reconstructed from plant names ending in -δίλα, -*zila*) is connected to Bithynian and Thracian feminine names (pp. 138, 396–397).

Names and languages

Dana posits four onomastic stocks, Thracian, Dacian or Daco-Moesian, Western Thracian and Bithynian, with correlated languages and territories.³⁸ Since the Daco-Moesian onomastics benefits from the most detailed description, I will use it as a case study. The map in Figure 1 (p. lxvi) depicts the four territories and, in particular, the Daco-Moesian area stretching deep into *barbaricum*, in regions for which there are no names, but also no inscriptions or literary sources. The suggested territory bears an uncanny resemblance to that of the infamous Geto-Dacians and it's just too vast to be true: we are to imagine that pre-Roman Southeastern Europe was more homogenous culturally and linguistically than it has ever been since! The author follows the traditional view that Getae and Dacians had the same native language, and cites uncritically various ancient authors such as Pliny and Strabo.³⁹ He takes at face value Georgiev's controversial theory about languages and toponyms.⁴⁰ Be that as it may, turning to Figure 2 (p. lxviii), some other discrepancies become apparent. The Daco-Moesian names are located primarily in Moesia Inferior and only scarcely in Dacia and Moesia Superior. A comparison between Figures 2 and 3 (p. lxix) indicates that Thracian names outnumber the Daco-Moesian ones in Dacia, as well as in many parts of Moesia Superior and Inferior. Surely, such inconsistencies may be explained away, however, the linguistic and onomastic picture could have been more complex than assumed in this book.

Many scholars denounced the practice of deriving languages from names,⁴¹ which, in my opinion, is one of the main reasons Thracology fails to convince. Dana moves one step further and constructs a phylogenetic tree of the Thracian languages (p. lxxxii) The data consists of

³⁸ DANA 2004, 433.

³⁹ Using the same word (ὁμόγλωττοι), Strabo also claims the Armenians, the Medes, the Caucasian Iberians and the Syrians spoke the same language! (Str. 11.14.5) See also HÄLMAGI 2015, 39–40.

⁴⁰ CLACKSON 2015, 5 on Ligurian toponymy: “The best single conclusion to draw from this is probably that place-names are always fertile ground for unverifiable speculation, but do not provide a secure basis for assigning language identity.” For a case study of place-name construction and its relation to ethnicity see also HALSALL 1995, 10–12.

⁴¹ PISANI 1961, 253; CLACKSON 2015, 3–6, 9. On lexicostatistics and similar approaches see *infra*, nn. 33, 34.

12 names(!) claimed to be shared among the four languages. The methodology is at variance with traditional historical linguistics. On one hand, vocabulary alone doesn't prove much:⁴² for example, there are numerous words of French origin in English and English is not a Romance language. There's no evidence the names selected here are cognates, and not borrowed, if not similar by coincidence.⁴³ A second major complication is that the author counts shared retentions, whereas the linguists know that shared innovations matter. Dana should have shown what separates Dacian and Thracian from the rest of the Indo-European languages, or what separates Western Thracian and Bithynian from the rest of the Thracian languages. Otherwise, such groupings make no sense.

The general impression left by this chapter is that Thracian is eventually treated as a single language. Its internal differentiation is meagre and inconsistent. Superficial similarities in names prove too little, forming an unstable ground to discuss the barbarian languages from these regions. Cultural interactions between Bithynians and Phrygians, or between Dacians and Scordisci, are not explored and not questioned at all. They may have had much more in common than Bithynians and Dacians.

Dana must be praised for what is the best survey of epigraphic evidence in Thracian studies up to the present moment. All the same, his interpretations are moot. Being a book of contrasts, it is a dangerous book. It supplants Detschew's work in various ways, including some that were not intended.

Dragoş Hălmagi

PhD candidate in Ancient History

Faculty of History, University of Bucharest

dragoshhalmagi@gmail.com

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⁴² MEILLET 1908, 126: "Les coïncidences de vocabulaire n'ont en général qu'une très petite valeur probante".

⁴³ See the cautious approaches by ZGUSTA 1965, 92-93, 99.

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