

Historical Implications of a Romanian Lexical Family of Old Germanic Origin

(*ban, bănat, băni, bănuî, băntui*)

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One can rarely find a series of cognates as significant, for both the Old Germanic domain¹ and for the post-ancient history of Southeast-Central Europe, as the *ban* family of words, to be found in Romanian and in several neighbouring languages.² It may now appear as quite surprising that no one has proposed Old Germanic origins for those *ban* cognates. Such a situation was, in my opinion, caused by the fact that some earlier etymological explanations regarding the *ban* family were considered to be definitive solutions, so they became a kind of “etymological legends” transmitted from author to author until the present day. Those legends encouraged a perpetuation of confusing references and missing links, which could have been solved by new approaches to otherwise well-recorded lexical materials.

Key Words: Romanian; Old Germanic; Ban; *Bănat; Băni; Bănuî; Băntui;* Phonetics; Semantics; Priest-kings; Tribal magistrates; Juridical terms; *Völkerwanderung*; Indo-European; Goths; Langobards; Vandals; Gepids; Bastarni; Slavs; Avars; Serbian; Serbo-Croatian; Hungarians.

Views on the Position and Origin of Romanian *ban*

The most important facts about the Romanian terms *ban* ‘feudal title of nobility’ and *ban* ‘coin, money’ are to be found in the first volume of *Micul dicționar academic* (MDA 2001, s.v. *ban*), in Alexandru Ciorănescu’s etymological dictionary of Romanian (2001, s.v. *ban*), and especially in Gabriella Schubert’s book on what she presents as stock of Hungarian loans in neighbouring languages (1982). The authors of MDA cautiously present Rmn. *ban* as a word “of unknown etymology,” and they only compare it

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¹ I will apply the label “Old Germanic” (O.Gmc.) to idioms spoken during a period of about one millennium, that is, approximately the period between the motion of the Bastarnae towards the Lower Danube (3rd-2nd centuries BC) and the eventual disappearance, by assimilation, of Gothic, Gepidic, and Langobard identity nuclei (7th-8th centuries).

² I placed Romanian first for reasons that will become apparent in the following demonstration.

to obvious relatives in neighbouring languages.³ Most other authors indicate *borrowing* from those languages into Romanian, an idea that is hardly tenable, as I will demonstrate below. To add to the etymological confusion, authors such as Tiktin (1903, s.v. *ban*²) and Rosetti (1986: 384) unhesitatingly indicate a Hungarian origin for Rmn. *ban* ‘feudal title’. In his turn, Ivănescu (*Istoria limbii române*, 2000: 429) first states that the Romanian term under discussion stands for “a Serbo-Croatian element” adopted by all speakers of Daco-Romanian, then he considers (loc. cit.) that *ban* ‘feudal title’ has “a double origin: Hungarian and Serbian.”⁴ In regard to generally accepted views on the primary source of *ban*, the most significant details are certainly the ones presented by Ciorănescu and Schubert.

Ciorănescu, s.v. *ban*, takes into consideration the fact the Southeast-Central European term *ban* (Latinized in medieval documents as *banus*) was first recorded as title of a “count” who acted as a representative of kingly power in “southern areas of the kingdom of Hungary” (namely in areas designated as *banatus* in Hungarian documents written in Latin). Subsequently, in the mid-14th century, Romanian princes of Wallachia (*Țara Românească* – “the Romanian Country”) often added the title of *ban* - of Severin, of Mehedinți, of Oltenia, or of Craiova - to their own title of *domn* (< Lat. *dominus*).⁵ Worth mentioning is that, in a Wallachian document of 1486 (in Old Church Slavonic), published by Hasdeu (*Cuvente den bătrîni*, ed. 1983: 161), two contemporary *bani* of Craiova (*župan Dimitru* and *župan Djabatko*) are mentioned; and an identical situation (two co-existent *bani de Craiova*) is reflected in another Wallachian document, in Romanian, issued in 1602 (Hasdeu 1983: 160). Romanian historians commonly mention the title of *ban* as borne by the *boyar* who acted as governor of Oltenia, and finally by the one who had the highest rank at the princely court of Wallachia.

In regard to the primary source of the term *ban*, Ciorănescu (loc. cit.) adopts a generalized opinion of his time (the fourth-

³ MDA (loc.cit.) gives “cf. Hung. *bán*, Serb. *ban*” (and, I may add, cf. Bulg. *ban*).

⁴ In this article, all translations of quotations into English are mine.

⁵ The Romanian title of *domn* (‘ruler, master, lord’) was rendered by *gospodar* in the (quite many) documents written in Slavonic, and by *princeps* in the (few) ones written in Latin.

fifth decades of the 20th century): “It appears to be a Mongolic word, probably Avaric. Cf. Mongol *bajan* ‘rich, wealthy’.” The same author goes on by mentioning that the term under discussion was first recorded in tenth-century Byzantine Greek, as *βοεάνος*, and that Hungarians appear to have taken over (from whom?) “both title and institution,” and to have transmitted them to Romanians and Slavs. Although Ciorănescu’s views, in the case under discussion, did not add much to the (wrong) traditional ones, at least as regards Rmn. *ban* ‘money, coin’ he had his own idea about a possible *German* origin (as I will point out somewhere below).

Gabriella Schubert’s Assumptions

Numerous and valuable details are to be found in Schubert 1982: 252-257. Like Ciorănescu and others, Schubert assumes that both Slavs and Romanians borrowed *ban* from the Hungarians; but the very material given by her (loc.cit.) makes that direction of borrowing appear as doubtful.

Schubert (p. 252) presents Hung. *bán* as coming from “Old Croatian” *bān* ‘master’,⁶ first recorded in 1063, in a document of King Krešimir.⁷ Then she takes into consideration (p. 256) the possibility that the function of *banus* (a Latinized variant) may have existed in Croatia *before* the coming of the Hungarians; however, she assumes that it was as designation of a Hungarian high official (*Verwalter*) that the term *ban* subsequently spread to South Slavs and to Romanians. That may be true, regionally, but it does not explain the whole spreading (and productivity) of *ban* in Southeast Europe; nor does it help one very much in establishing the actual age of *ban* in that area. In regard to the etymology of the term under discussion, Schubert, like others, wrongly assumes that “Old Croatian” *bān* comes from *Baian*, “the name of an Avaric ruler of the latter half of the 6th century” (p. 252), then she decisively proposes the following evolution: Avar.

⁶ Schubert (loc.cit.) just mentions, and implicitly rejects an etymology (Décsy’s) according to which Hung. *bán* comes directly from “Altaic *bajan*.” Even less credible than that Altaic solution is the one that presupposes a derivation of Serb.-Croat. *ban* (and, ultimately, of Hung. *bán*) from Turk. *bay* ‘rich man’, as indicated in *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch* (DUW), 2001, s.v. **Ban**.

⁷ It was also in the 11th century that a “Ban of Bosnia” was mentioned as participant in the conflict between the Byzantines and the Slavs on the Adriatic coast (cf. Ostrogorsky 1969: 312).

Baian > Croat. *ban* > Hung. *bán* (“this spread then in the Balkans, as name of a bearer of royal authority and as designation of an official position” – p. 257). Schubert does not explain by what kind of shift a name of a khagan of the Avars came to produce a term meaning ‘master’ (in Croatian), and ‘royal administrator’ (in Hungarian and other languages), nor by what phonetic alterations /bajan/ became /ba:n/ or /ban/. Also, there is an etymologically and chronologically confusing aspect in Schubert’s presentation of a further development of *ban*. She first presents (p. 253) Bulg. *ban* as one word with two meanings: “1. Banus, Statthalter, Fürst; Leiter der Verwaltung eines bestimmten Gebietes in der Zeit des Feudalismus auf dem Balkan; 2. Kleine Kupfermünze, neuerdings ein Hundertstel des rum. *Lej*” [actually, *leu*]. To the latter she immediately adds that, as name of currency, O.Bulg. *банъ* (frequently occurring in Bulgarian folklore), was first recorded in the 10th century (about one century before “Old Croatian” *bān*, that is). But as designation of currency, Schubert believes, the Old Bulgarian word under discussion must have come from the language of the Turkic Bulgars (“jedoch wohl aus der Sprache der Bolgarotürken”). After that assumption, in subsequent passages (p. 255 and 256-257) Schubert rather surprisingly indicates that *ban* ‘coin’ first referred to a type of local currency issued by the *banus* of Severin (in today’s Southwest Romania), and that it became a usual term in Romanian, through which it “partially” (“teilweise”) entered Bulgarian too. I consider that it would be less confusing to assume that the above mentioned tenth-century O.Bulg. *банъ* (> today’s Bulg. *ban* ‘small coin’) had one and the same ultimate (non-Turkic) source as Rmn. *ban* ‘small coin, money’ and as the latter’s correspondents in other Southeast European languages. Along the same line, if we accept Schubert’s assumption that *ban* ‘coin’ derives from the title of a certain *banus* (see also below), we must also assume that such a derivation took place *before* the 10th century, when *банъ* ‘small coin’ came to be recorded in Old Bulgarian. Under such circumstances, on the one hand (etymologically) we must definitely reject the idea that *ban* may derive from the Avaric anthroponym *Baian*; but on the other hand (historically) we are forced to go as far back in time as the period in which exactly the above-mentioned khagan ruled over Avars, Slavs and

marginal Romans (or, rather, a proto-Romanian population).

History and Language

Around AD 562 Baian and his Avars had come to have command over “a conglomerate of Iranian, Gothic and Slavic tribes” (cf. Madgearu 2005: 107) in regions of today’s Ukraine and Southeast Romania. Emperor Justinian did not allow the Avars to penetrate south of the Danube, but after him, during the decade 577-587, both the Avars and the Slavs mobilized by the former invaded South Danubian regions of the Empire, and Constantinople had to pay peace subsidies. In the meantime, Baian’s Avars had come into touch with Old Germanic people who had settled to the west of what was still remembered as Ancient Dacia (*Dacia antiqua*). Among other things, the 566-567 alliance between the Avars (who had come to control a vast Carpathian-Pannonian area) and the West Germanic tribe of the Langobards led to the destruction of one of the earliest Germanic states, namely the Gepidic kingdom ruled by King Kunimund (cf. Diculescu 1922: 160-162). The existence of that kingdom, at that time (over territories now belonging to Croatia, Serbia, Hungary and Romania),⁸ is as important for this discussion as the parallel existence of “Gothic tribes” east of the Carpathians. The historical position and dating of the Gepidic state suggest that sixth-century Old Germanic institutional terms *could* be imposed on a local (partially Romanized) population of the Middle Danube before the coming of the Avars and the Slavs, then of the Hungarians. From a geo-historical standpoint, it is not surprising that it is mainly in Latin-written Hungarian documents of the Middle Ages where we can find *banus* and *banatus* side by side (for instance, with my italics: “eodem Emerico de Zapolya, Dalmatie, Croatie et Sclavonie regnorum nostrorum et prefato Nicolao de Wylak, Machovensii *banis*, honore *banatus* Zeuriensis vacante,” in a document issued by *Mathias rex* in 1466 – as given in Rusu 1989: 268). Also, it is not surprising that the Latin-suffixed *banatus* survived as name of a province (*Banat*, now divided between Serbia and Romania) in an area that once was a central part of *Gepidia*, whose power-centre was Sirmium (today’s Sremska Mitrovica).

⁸ See map entitled “Gepidien nach 454” in Diculescu 1922: 76).

There hardly is anything written in Gepidic.⁹ As for Gothic,¹⁰ it left at least one element that indicates the existence of an Old “East Germanic” predecessor of *ban* (as a juridical-administrative term), namely a West Romance echo of a Gothic compound **bannwîda*. That term appears to have been used in the language of the Visigoths who, after having moved west, established their own state formation in the south of today’s France, around Tolosa (Toulouse), in the early 5th century. Out of a place-name recorded (in the 12th century) as *Banoida* in that region, Gamillscheg (1934, I: 352) credibly reconstructed Goth. **bannwîda*, whose meaning he rendered by a corresponding German compound, “Bannweite.” We can easily compare the latter to Germ. *Bannmeile* ‘nähere Umgebung einer Stadt, in der besondere Vorschriften galten’ (see Fr. *banlieu* below), as well as to other German compounds with the same initial element: *Bannfluch* ‘mit einer Verfluchung verbundener Kirchenbann’, *Bannkreis* ‘Einflussbereich’, or *Bannwald* ‘(Schutz)wald (gegen Lawinen), in dem kein Holz geschlagen werden darf’ (all extracted from *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*, 2001). Moreover, it is also O.Gmc. *bann* that accounts not only for a multitude of derivatives and compounds in West Romance languages (see below), but also, in my opinion, for the whole Southeast European *ban* family of words that has been untenably referred either to the name of Khagan Baian, or to various Altaic or Turkic terms.¹¹

When Gamillscheg reconstructed Goth **bannwîda*, he did it on the basis of well-recorded Old Germanic terms, such as O.Norse *bann* (‘verbot, bann, verbannung’ – in the lower-case transcription of de Vries 1961, s.v. *bann*), or O.H.Germ. *ban* (‘Gebot unter Strafdrohung, Acht, Bann’ – in the glossary of Waldner 1970). The solid position of that term on Germanic

⁹ At the end of Köbler’s Gothic dictionary there is a one-page glossary entitled “Gepidisch”, but it contains only reconstructed terms (the only exceptions are three words recorded in Latinized forms).

¹⁰ Worth observing is that Gothic was an “East Germanic” language closely related to Gepidic, but better-known, due to Wulfila’s fourth-century translation of the *Bible*.

¹¹ The name of Khagan Baian may be referred to the Turkic material invoked by some interpreters of the legendary Russian name *Boyan*. In the presentation of the latter, Vasmer mentions etymological opinions that center on Mongol *bajan* ‘rich’, Altaic *Bajan*, or names that were common “with Avars and Bulgars.”

ground is proved by the fact that it still occurs in practically all modern Germanic languages.¹² Also, at times of Germanic domination, the same term (together with some of its derivatives) was imposed on speakers of Romance and it became part of their usual vocabulary. (We can also imagine numerous contexts in which, while being gradually assimilated by Romance majorities, Germanic communities continued to use some of their own terminology.) Gamillscheg 1935, II: 279 mentions a whole series of terms of Old Germanic origin, among which outstanding are “Alpenromanisch” *bannir*¹³ and “Galloromanisch” *bannire* (‘gerichtlich vorladen’), both from a Frankish verb **bannjan*.

In his pan-Romance dictionary, Meyer-Lübke included an article (933a.) on Romance terms based on “*bann* (fränk.) ‘Befehl unter Strafdrohung’.” According to Meyer-Lübke, that Frankish term represents the origin of the French and Provençal *ban* (therefrom borrowed in Old Italian and Old Spanish, as *bano*). Fr./Prov. *ban* preserved the archaic meaning of ‘public announcement’ (‘öffentliche Verkündigung’ – cf. Eng. *banns*), but it also acquired secondary meanings such as ‘district’ (‘Bezirk’), ‘confiscation’ (‘Beschlagnahmung’), or ‘prohibition of harvesting’ (‘Verbot zu ernten’). Meyer-Lübke (loc.cit.) mentions some derivatives too, such as *banal* – whose initial semantic sphere is still visible in O.Fr. *four banal* ‘community oven’ (‘Gemeindeofen’) –, and Prov. *bandó* ‘permission’ (‘Erlaubnis’). The last term should be viewed in connection with a certain conflation observed by Gamillscheg (loc.cit.), namely the one that brought together the Latinized Germanic terms *bannum* ‘Bann’ and *bandum* ‘Fahne’ (cf. Goth. *bandwa* ‘sign, token’ in Köbler’s dictionary).¹⁴

¹² German has *Bann*, and a whole series of compounds and derivatives from it (see above). Swedish has *bann* ‘excommunication’, *banna* ‘to scold’, *förbanna* ‘to curse’ (cf. Germ. *verbannen*); *förbannelse* ‘curse’. As for Engl. *ban*, it definitely comes from Old English (cf. O.Eng. *bannan* ‘to summon’ and *ge-ban* ‘command, ordinance, decree, proclamation’, in the Bosworth dictionary), whereas Engl. *banns* and *banish* are based on Germanisms from Norman French. Also, modern Germanic languages (like most modern European languages) have adopted *banal* from French.

¹³ Besides *bannir*, Gamillscheg (loc.cit.) also mentions Alpine Romance related terms such as *bandire* (‘öffentlich bekanntmachen’), or *bandischar* (‘verbannen’).

¹⁴ See Corominas on Span. *bandido* ‘proscrito’ < It. *bandito* < *bandire* ‘proscribir’, which, in its turn, appears to derive from both Frankish **bannjan* and Goth.

The most visible result of the conflation under discussion is a series of Romance terms of Old Germanic origin, such as the ones included in Battisti/ Alessio 1950-57. That dictionary gives the Italian terms *bannire* and *banno* separately, as dialectal variants of the better-known *bandire* ('annunciare pubblicamente e solennemente') and *bando* ('decreto, condanna, esilio'). Worth mentioning is that, besides *bando/ banno* and *bandire/ bannire*, the same Italian dictionary includes *bano* 'governatore d'un banato', a Serbian-Croatian loan that also occur as title in front of person-names (as in *ban Sansovino*, or *bam Sanudo*). Battisti and Alessio (loc.cit.) suggest no Germanic origin for the Serbian-Croatian source-word of It. *bano*, and they indicate no etymological relationship between *bano* and *banno*. However, the meeting of *bano* (which I consider to be based on an Old Germanism of Serbian-Croatian) and the Germanism *banno* on Italian ground is significant in itself. Also significant is, in the same respect, the abundance of *bann/ band* terms in Alpine Romance. For my own purposes, I will keep in mind that "Alpenromanisch" is the branch of West Romance closest to the area where Gepids, Goths, Langobards and speakers of late Balkan Vulgar Latin (or, already, proto-Romanian) used to live side by side for a significant period of time.

Phonetic and Semantic Aspects

Since my intention is to demonstrate that a word like *ban* could exist in Romanian practically from its very beginnings as a distinct Romance language, I will prevent a possible objection of a phonetic order at this point. One might be tempted to say that Rmn. *ban* can be only as old in Romanian as Slavic loans such as *hrană* and *rană*, since, like the latter, *ban* does not show a change typical of certain words inherited by Romanian from Latin. It is generally known that a syllable like /an/, in a stressed position, became /ən/ (later /in/) in the very passage from Vulgar Latin to Romanian (see Ivănescu 2000: 206). Thus Romanian has *lână* 'wool' from Lat. *lana*, and it has *păgân* 'pagan' from Lat.

bandujan; see also Bernardi/ Decurtins on Alpine Romance *bandiar* 'verbannen, ausweisen', of the same double origin (the Gothic source being indicated first). In the same respect, the Coromines dictionary of Catalan (1983) presents an obsolete *baner* as replaced by *bander* ("reemplaçat per *bander*").

pagánus). However, as Ivănescu shows (loc.cit.), a Latin word like *annus* ‘year’ produced Romanian *an* (not **ân* or **în*), since “in the period in which Romanian was in the making, Latin double consonants were still double.”¹⁵ Therefore, if during the same period (approximately between the 5th century and the 7th) an Old Germanic *bann* - with a vowel /a/ followed by an emphatic (“double”) nasal - entered the language of proto-Romanians, that loan could remain with the form *ban* (not **băn* or **bân*), just as Lat. *annus* remained with the form *an*.

The long vowel of Hung. *bán* deserves at least a short comment, since its quantity is obviously different from that of the short vowel of O.Gmc. *bann*. In my opinion, the very quantity of Hung. *bán* indicates that the term was not borrowed by native speakers of Hungarian directly from a Germanic idiom, but through the intermediation of a language (either Slavic or Romance) whose phonology was “indifferent” to vowel quantity,¹⁶ that is, a language with no functional-phonemic opposition of long and short vowels. Or, more simply than that, Hungarians must have heard a word whose vowel they felt to be of a quality closer to their long /a:/ than to their short /a/ (subsequently labialized).¹⁷

¹⁵ I must observe that although Ivănescu observes the rule in the case of Lat. *annus* > Rmn. *an*, he does not do the same thing in a case that, in my opinion, should be presented simply as Lat. *canna* ‘kind of vase or pot’ > Rmn. *can* ‘cup, jug’. About the latter, Ivănescu (2000: 507) says “*can* ‘Kanne, Krug’, ‘pot’, ‘cruche’ (< Germ. *Kanne*, but also Hung. *kanna*),” whereas MDA presents Rmn. *can* (recorded in the 17th century) as coming from “Bulg. *kana*, Germ. *Kanne*.” In fact, the wrong etymological interpretation of Rmn. *can* appears to be part of a more general confusion. Thus, the Ernout/ Meillet dictionary of Latin presents *canna* as “mot germanique,” whereas the Kluge dictionary presents Germ. *Kanne* as “assumedly borrowed from M.Lat. *canna*” (although “the other direction of borrowing is not excluded”), and the Pfeifer dictionary presents the same German word as “possibly of Galloroman origin.” Anyway, what I see as certain about Rmn. *can* is that, in its case, we are not in need of any intermediary in order to demonstrate its direct descent from Lat. *canna*.

¹⁶ In connection with the undeniable existence of *bann* terms in Frankish (from which French inherited its rich *ban* family of words), I do not neglect the historical fact that in 796 Charlemagne’s son, Pippin, defeated the Avars in their own Pannonian power-centre (cf. Diculescu 1922: 234), and that thereafter the Frankish domination extended as far as the Adriatic Sea and the Carpathians. However, it would be hard to believe that the temporary (and mainly military) presence of the Franks in Adriatic-Danubian-Carpathian regions could impose *bann* terms that subsequently entered all the major languages of that area.

¹⁷ In regard to labialization, Alpine Romance has an interesting variant *bonn* ‘Bann, Verbannung’ (< Frank. *bann*), co-existing with a non-labialized variant *bann*

Semantically speaking, in order to understand what happened to O.Gmc. *bann* (and, implicitly, to understand why that term may be labeled as “proto-feudal”), we should pay some more attention to the above-mentioned Frank. **bannjan*, as well as to its cognate, Frank. **ban* (‘loi, ordre dont la non-observance entraîne une peine’),¹⁸ which account for a significant family of Old Germanisms perpetuated in French. Of those I will mention the most important ones, with meanings as given in *Petit Larousse* and in Baumgartner/ Ménard 1996: (1) **ban** ‘pouvoir, ordre sous menace; ensemble des vassaux directs du suzerain; convocation de ceux-ci; jugement qui interdit ou assigne certaines résidences à un condamné après sa libération; proclamation officielle et publique; promesse de mariage publiée à l’église; juridiction’; (2) **banal** ‘à l’usage de tous, commun’;¹⁹ (3) **banlieue** (< Frank. *ban* + Lat *locus* ‘place’) ‘ensemble des agglomérations qui environnent un centre urbain et participent à son existence’; (4) **bannière** ‘enseigne sou laquelle se rangeaient les vassaux d’un seigneur pour aller à la guerre’; (5) **banneret** ‘seigneur de fief qui comptait un nombre suffisant de vassaux pour lever une bannière’; (6) **bannir** ‘condamner à l’exil, proscrire’; (7) **banni** ‘expulsé de sa patrie, proscrit, exilé’; (8) **abandon** (O.Fr.) ‘pouvoir, autorité’ (< *bandon* < *ban*); (9) **aubain** ‘individu fixé dans un pays étranger’ (< Frank. **aliban* ‘appartenent à un autre ban’); (10) **forban** ‘pirate, individu sans scrupules, bandit’ (< O.Fr. *forbannir* - cf. German *verbannen* ‘to banish’, as a prefixed verb).

The above-presented French lexical family based on O.Gmc. *bann* has clear correspondents in other West Romance idioms too. In general, Romanists have observed Meyer-Lübke’s view (1935, s.v. *bann*) according to which Frank. *bann* ‘order under threat of punishment’ (‘Befehl unter Strafdrohung’) became *ban* ‘proclamation, district, confiscation, prohibition’ in Old French and Old Provençal, wherefrom that term and/or its derivatives entered neighbouring Romance idioms. The

and with derivatives like *bannir* ‘öffentlich bekanntmachen’ and *bannida* ‘Einberufung von Sammlungen’ (cf. Bernardi et al. 1994, s.v. *bonn*).

¹⁸ Cf. Baumgartner/ Ménard 1996, s.v. *ban*.

¹⁹ In eighteenth-century English, the French loan *banal* still had the earlier mediaeval meaning of ‘obligatory for all the tenants of a feudal jurisdiction’ (cf. Hoad 1993, s.v. *banal*).

Coromines dictionary of Catalan (1983) contains a “terme de dret medieval,” namely Catal. *ban* (with the meaning of ‘proclamation’), from “fràncic *bann*”, through the intermediation of “les llengües de França.” The Corominas dictionary of Spanish (1967) includes: *baldón* ‘injuria’, 1300 [...], ‘tratamiento soberbio’ [...], y primitivamente ‘tratamiento arbitrario, a discreción’ (< fr. ant. *bandon* < frânc. BANN); *bando* ‘edicto solemne’, h. 1300 (< fr. *ban* < frânc. BAN[N]), and *bandido* ‘proscrito, forajido’, 1516 (< it. *bandito* < it. *bandire* ‘proscribir’ < frânc. BANNJAN).²⁰ As for Italian, the Battisti/Alessio dictionary (1950) refers It. *bando* and its dialectal variant *banno* (‘decreto, condanna, esilio’) to both Goth. *bandwo* (‘segno, insegna’) and O.H.Germ. *ban* (‘notificazione’), as well as to the Latinized versions of the two Old Germanic terms (*bandum* and *bannus*, -um, respectively – see also below). There is a quite coherent relationship among all these Romance terms: they all reflect Old Germanic sources, and they all originally referred to feudal hierarchy and social regulations. However, for a clearer understanding of the relationship between those Germanisms of French and Spanish and the proto-feudal roots of the Southeast European *ban* (which became *bán* in Hungarian) we should review the basic opinions on the ultimate roots of O.Gmc. *bann*.

Indo-European Arguments

A general image of the productiveness of the IE root from which the Old Germanic *bann*-family derives from is to be found in the Pokorny dictionary of 1959, under *bhā-* ‘sprechen’ (‘to speak’).²¹ From the rich series of examples given by Pokorny (loc.cit.) we may draw the conclusion that IE **bhā-* ‘to speak’ has representatives in major branches of the IE family, such as Indian, Hellenic, Italic, Slavic, and Germanic, as well as in isolated branchlets, such as Tocharian and Armenian. Also, it is

²⁰ It is obvious that, in such cases, Corominas takes into consideration Romance intermediaries between Old Germanic and Spanish, and not also the possibility of a direct Gothic source (as he does, however in cases such as *ataviar*, *esquilar*, *gaita*, *ganso*, etc.).

²¹ Pokorny 1959 gives, separately, 1. *bh-* ‘glänzen’ (‘to shine’), and 2. *bh-* ‘sprechen’ (‘to speak’), which, I think, may have been originally related (as we can imagine primeval meanings such as ‘to make manifest, to beam, to show off, to express’).

quite obvious that not only the basic IE root under discussion, but also several of its suffixed extensions (such as **bhə-ti-s*, **bhā-nis*, **bhā-ni-s*, or **bhən-w-*) prove to have been very productive. Anyway, the material presented by Pokorny (loc.cit.) amply demonstrates that real IE terms such as O.Ind. *bhanati* ‘(he) speaks’, Gk. *phōnē* ‘voice’, Lat. *fānī* ‘to speak’, Armen. *ban* ‘word, speech’, O.C.Slav. *bajati* ‘to narrate, to heal’, O.Icel *bann* ‘prohibition, ban’ and O.H.Germ. *bannan* ‘to command’ are definitely related.

Very interesting links are also indicated in Chantraine’s dictionary of Ancient Greek (1868/1990), under *phēmí* ‘to declare, affirm, pretend, speak’, presented as based on an IE **bhə-*, or **bhə-*, certainly the same root as the one given as **bhā-* or **bha-* by other authors. (It is quite obvious that there has been hesitation in establishing the vowel quality and quantity of the primeval root under discussion.) Chantraine (loc.cit.) also takes into account an extension **bhen-*, which, in his opinion, directly accounts for both O.Ind. *bhanati* and Armen. *ban* (see above). Among the Indo-European relatives of Gk. *phēmí* Chantraine mentions O.H.Germ. *bannan* ‘to give an order’ (‘donner un ordre’) and the Latin family of *fāma* ‘fame’, *fābula* ‘conversation, story’, and *fānī* ‘to speak’ (all showing the regular shift IE /bh/ > Lat. /f/). To that Latin series we may add *fās* ‘permission or order of the gods, divine right’, which ancient authors would refer to *fānī* ‘to speak’ (see the Ernout/ Meillet dictionary, s.v. *fās*).

In regard to the field of Germanic etymology, I will observe that the Pfeifer dictionary refers Germ. *Bann* (‘zwingende Gewalt, Exkommunikation’) to a series of Old Germanic terms, including O.Norse *bann* ‘prohibition, ban, banishment’ and O.Engl. *bannan* ‘to order, to summon’. Then the same dictionary (s.v. *Bann*) makes a general statement according to which the Germanic term under discussion must originally have had the meaning of ‘solemn speech’, which later grew into a “central concept of mediaeval law.” In its turn, Köbler 1989 refers Goth. **bannwīda* (the compound reconstructed by Gamillscheg – see above) to O.Gmc. **bannaz* ‘Gebot, Bann’, based on IE **bha-* ‘sprechen’. Köbler went along the traditional etymological line, which is manifest not only in Pokorny 1959, but also in de Vries 1961, where O.Norse *bann* is referred to a

series of Germanic cognates, as well as to related non-Germanic terms, such as the above-mentioned ones (O.Ind. *bhanati* ‘(he) speaks’, Armen. *ban* ‘word, speech’, etc.), to which a Celtic term, O.Irl. *bann* ‘law’, is added (phonetically, observe IE /bh/ > Ind. /bh/, but Irl./ Armen./ Gmc. /b/).

Under **bhā-²* ‘to speak’, the authors²² of the appendix “Indo-European Roots” attached to AHD (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1973) give two “suffixed forms” (**bhā-²* + a nasal suffix) as bases of Gmc. **bannan* ‘to speak publicly (used of particular kinds of proclamation in feudal or pre-feudal custom)’, of Frank. **ban* ‘feudal jurisdiction, summons to military service, proclamation’, as well as of a Germanism recorded in Late Latin as *bannum* ‘proclamation’. As a matter of fact, the most significant of the Indo-European terms presented above indicate that, during the period in which Germanic tribes entered history, “pre-feudal custom” was expressed not by written laws, but by the voice of tribal “speakers.” The latter turned (at the time of incipient feudalism) into local “magistrates” of a justice-of-the-peace type, who eventually became local representatives of royal authority (of a type that coincided with that of the local *reeves* appointed by Anglo-Saxon kings – cf. *sheriff* < O.Engl. *scir-gerefa* ‘shire-reeve’). Practically, the lexical material so far mentioned may be considered to be sufficient for a presentation of the origins, correspondents and spreading of O.Gmc. *bann*, a word of undeniable Indo-European origin. However, in regard to the Old Germanic pre-feudal social system reflected in earlier meanings of O.Gmc. *bann*, some more historical facts should be taken into account.

Jewish-Germanic Parallels

Assuming that (much of) the Bible reflects real history, I must observe that there are even some biblical clues to the kind of socio-political context that may be envisaged in connection with the early history of Gmc. *bann*. Although the two historical moments are separated by over one millennium, there is striking similarity between the biblical passage from judges to kings (that is from Samuel and his sons to Saul and David) and the

²² Calvert Watkins et al. (a Harvard team).

Germanic passage from tribal priest-kings²³ to warrior-kings (see “die Abfolge Volkskönigtum – Heerkönigtum” in Wolfram 1995: 64). Moreover, in both cases the rise of real monarchy meant imitation of foreign models. The Bible reads: “And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel [...]. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel [...] and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (King James Version, 1 Samuel, 8).²⁴ As for early Germanic history, kings as founders of dynasties and states (be they Gothic, or Gepidic, or Frankish) appeared exclusively in relationship with Rome, that is, as part of a general *imitatio imperii*.

Another remarkable Jewish-Germanic parallel is the one between the archaic conquest-and-destruction ritual of Samuel’s time and the same kind of practice with early historical Germanics. Second-century-BC Romans were shocked to see that their strange opponents, the Cimbri and the Teutoni, “hanged their prisoners, drowned the horses of the latter, threw the spoils of war into the water or destroyed them” (Wolfram 1995: 28). In a pre-royal Jewish context, Samuel (the priest-judge) tells Saul that “the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel,” since Saul did not wipe out the Amalekites together with all their possessions, in keeping with God’s commandment (1 Samuel 15). I insist on that episode also because I found something remarkable in Luther’s translation of it. Whereas King James Version says that the Amalekites “should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord,” in Luther’s words what Saul was expected to do (about the Amalekites and their whole fortune) was *den Bann vollstrecken* - “execute the

²³ The existence of such personages at the time of the earliest contacts between Germanics and neighbouring peoples is proved by the fact that the proto-Germanic term for the tribal priest-king, **kuningas*, was borrowed by Baltic and Slavic populations; that is why there are terms such as Lithuanian *kunigas* ‘priest’, Czech *kn z* ‘priest’ and Slovak *k az* ‘priest, pastor’ (whereas subsequent semantic shifts, towards socio-political meanings, are manifest with Bulg. *knez* ‘mayor’ – cf. dialectal Romanian *chinez* ‘village magistrate’ -, Upper Sorbian *knjez* ‘lord’, Serbo-Croatian *kněz*, and Russian *kn’az* ‘prince’ – cf. Romanian *cneaz* ‘chieftain, judge, prince’) – see the Vasmer dictionary, s.v. *kn’az*, and the glossaries of Carlton 1990.

²⁴ In Luther’s German version, the elders’ demand reads: “So setze nun einen König über uns, der uns richte, wie ihn alle Heiden haben” - literally: “So put now a king over us, that he rule us, as all gentiles have him.”

commandment.” With his keen sense of his own language, Luther chose exactly Germ. *Bann*, in its most archaic sense, to express *the notion of divine commandment transmitted to mortals through the voice of a priest-judge*. The Bible gives us lots of details about how God’s voice could be heard by chosen “hearers”, who then acted as “speakers” whose voices made God’s will known to both kings and commoners of Israel. There also is sufficient information on how early Germanics received divine commandments, as I will point out below.

Reports on Certain Early Germanic Customs

The earliest information about Germanic tribal life does not come from the Germanics themselves, but from Greeks and Romans, who first considered Germanic barbarians to be just another kind of Celts.²⁵ When the Mediterranean world came to feel the impact of the earliest Germanic intruders (*first* the Bastarni in the Southeast, *then* the Cimbri and Teutoni in the Southwest and Centre of Europe), the Greek-Roman world became interested mainly in the military-political dynamics of those intruders. For instance, in the second century B.C., Polybios (XXVI, 9) refers to the Bastarni of his time²⁶ only in regard to their potential as allies of King Philip V of Macedonia against Rome. About a century later, as conqueror of Gaul, Caesar could gather more detailed information about the Germanic way of life, which he presented in contrast with the Celtic one.²⁷ One special merit of Caesar’s celebrated *Conquest of Gaul* is that, in passages dedicated to Germanic opponents, the emperor-to-be did not observe only military-political features, but also religious ones. For instance, Caesar mentions that (after Ariovistus’s Suebi unexpectedly retired from a battle) he was told, by some prisoners, that “the German matrons, who used to draw lots and employ other methods of divination to decide whether it was advisable to join battle, had pronounced that the Germans were not destined to win if they fought before the new

²⁵ Even as late as the latter half of the nineteenth century, a remarkable historian, Mommsen (1987, I: 444), presented Clondicus - the Bastarnic chief who had become an ally of Philip V of Macedonia – as commander of a “Celtic army.”

²⁶ In Wolfram’s presentation (1995: 26), the Bastarni appear as the earliest Germanics who came into direct touch with “the Mediterranean world” (“die Mittelmeerwelt”).

²⁷ I will quote from Handford’s translation of Caesar’s *Conquest of Gaul*, 1960.

moon" (II, 2). About one century later, Tacitus (*Germania*, 10) observes similar things about Germanic religious beliefs and practices:

For auspices and the casting of lots they have the highest possible regard [...]. They break off a branch of a fruit-tree and slice it into strips; they distinguish these by certain runes and throw them [...] on to a white cloth. Then the priest of the State if the consultation is a public one, the father of the family if it is private, after a prayer to the gods and an intent gaze heavenward, picks up three, one at a time, and reads their meaning from the runes scored on them. [...] Their practice of questioning the notes and flights of birds is, of course, known also to us; peculiar to the Germans is the seeking of presentiments and warnings from horses. These horses are kept at the public expense [...]; they are pure white and undefiled by work for man. The priest or king or chief of the State yokes them to a sacred chariot and goes along with them, noting their neighings and snortings. No form of auspices inspires greater trust ...

I find it difficult to decide whether it was the Germanic priest, or king, or chief who had more to do with interpretation and imposition of a *bann* type of regulations during the long period in which Bastarni, Goths and Gepids became, in turn, dynamic factors in the history of Southeast Europe. I am inclined to believe that, under circumstances in which Germanics acted as *Herrenvolk* among populations with other religious beliefs than their own, social aspects (to be observed by both Germanic masters and non-Germanic subjects) became more important than observance of auspices and divine commandments. Thus the archaic notion of *bann* must have been gradually secularized (the process continuing under early feudal circumstances).²⁸

In regard to the Germanic social-juridical customs of his

²⁸ Whereas in the Germanic world of Caesar's time the term *bann* most probably still was close, both etymologically and semantically, to Lat. *fs* ('divine commandment'), at the time when Goths and Gepids strove to build their own state formations *bann* must have come to correspond semantically rather to Lat. *is*, which in imperial Roman times referred mainly to lay justice. Nevertheless we should not neglect the fact that, in very early Latin, not only *fs*, but also *is* and *lex* had religious implications (see those Latin words as presented in the Ernout/Meillet dictionary)

time, Caesar (in his *De bello Gallico*) makes a contrastive presentation. First he describes the social stratification of the Gaulish Celts, whose “common people” were treated “almost as slaves” by the “two privileged classes,” the druids and the military aristocracy (I, 1); then he opens a new chapter (I, 2) by a rather abrupt statement: “The customs of the Germans are entirely different.” Caesar goes on by making the following observations, several of which are quite meaningful for this discussion:

The Germans are not agriculturalists, and live principally on milk, cheese, and meat. No one possesses any definite amount of land as private property; the magistrates and tribal chiefs annually assign a holding to clans and groups of kinsmen [...] and the next year make them move on somewhere else. [...] When a tribe is attacked or intends to attack another, officers are chosen to conduct the campaign and invested with powers of life and death. In peace-time there is no central magistracy; the chiefs of the various districts and cantons administer justice and settle disputes among their own people.

At that time (about the middle of the first century BC) the Suebic Germans who wanted to cross the Rhine and conquer Gaul already had a supreme military “officer,” Ariovistus, whom later historians were to consider as “the first *rex Germanorum*, king of the Germans” (Wolfram 1995: 29). No doubt, Ariovistus stood for an important step towards a new kind of *rex*, a military leader rather than a religiously minded chief. But, out of Caesar’s presentation, we may understand that “magistrates and tribal chiefs” also had very important roles to play in Germanic internal affairs. In the centuries to follow, during the rise and fall of Imperial Rome, the military function of Germanic tribal units constantly grew in importance, a process that also implied growing importance of Germanic kings (*reges*) and military leaders (*duces*). However, even under those circumstances, Old Germanic peace-time “magistrates” must have continued to administer justice not only “among their own people,” but also among non-Germans on whom they imposed themselves as representatives of “significant gentile power.”²⁹

²⁹ Cf. Wolfram 1995: 26, on the Bastarni, who “im letzten Drittel des dritten

To go east again, I will fully agree with Diculescu's interpretation of "rex Cniva," the one who (according to Cassiodorus) was the fatal Gothic opponent of Emperor Decius in the middle of the third century. Diculescu (1922: 35) finds a solution to what others regarded as a confusing situation, namely that Cniva (who did not even belong to the Gothic royal family of the Amali) was mentioned as *rex* at a moment when the actual king of all the Goths, Ostrogota, was still alive. According to Diculescu's credible interpretation (loc.cit.), Cniva was not really a *rex*, but just a high officer:

In der Tat war Kniwa so wenig der Nachfolger Ostrogotas, wie ein Gotenkönig überhaupt. Er war ein Gaukönig, ein "regulus" oder ein Herzog gleich anderen Gotenführern in den mösischen Feldzügen...

So, rather than a *rex*, Cniva was (like Athanaric later – see below) a *judex*, or a *dux*, in Roman terms. He must have started as ruler over a certain **bannwīda*, a newly conquered and militarily controlled territory somewhere north of the Lower Danube. Worth observing, in this context, is that the quotation from Diculescu contains the German term *Herzog*, a transparent compound literally meaning 'army-leader' (cf. Goth. **harjatuga*, O.H.Germ. *herizoho*, O.Norse *hertogi*, O.Engl. *heretoga*). That compound shows a Germanic **harja* 'army' (cf. Germ. *Heer*) combined with **tuga*,³⁰ the latter semantically and etymologically corresponding to Lat. *dux*.³¹

A certain footnote in Ivănescu 2000: 79 should be mentioned at this point. That note centres on the "epithet of *judex*" that was repeatedly attached, in ancient historical writings, to the name of Athanaric (the Visigothic ruler who vainly tried to stop the invasion of the Huns into what is now Eastern Romania and the Republic of Moldova). Ivănescu chose to criticize Vasile Pârvan and to adopt a (hardly tenable) opinion expressed by Radu Vulpe. Pârvan (in a study of 1911)

vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts an der unteren Donau auftauchten und hier sehr rasch zu einer bedeutenden gentilen Macht wurden."

³⁰ Cf. Engl. *tug*, *tow*, and Germ. *Zug*.

³¹ There have been debates on whether the *Herzog* title reflects a loan-translation of Gk. *strategos* or *stratelates* (see Pfeifer, s.v. *Herzog*), and whether O.C.Slav. *voevoda* (> Rmn. *voievod*) reflects a loan-translation of the Old Germanic title under discussion (see Vasmer, s.v. *voevoda*).

considered that Athanaric's position of *judex* must have reflected some kind of continuation of a Roman juridical institution that survived north of the Danube after the withdrawal of the Roman administration and army from the province of Dacia in the 3rd century. Vulpe (in a study of 1957) rejected Pârvan's view and stated that the application of the title of *judex* to Athanaric was due simply to the similarity in form between that Latin term and Goth. *þiudans* 'chief of the whole people' (in Vulpe's interpretation). My opinion is that neither Pârvan nor Vulpe (followed by Ivănescu) were right. On the one hand, Athanaric, a fourth-century heathen Visigothic ruler, had no reason to imitate Roman juridical officers; on the other hand, he probably did not have the title of *þiudans*, which, at that time (as manifest in Wulfila's *Bible*, of the same 4th century), could be used as a translation of Gk. *basileus*. Basically, Athanaric's position must have been that of an Old Germanic "magistrate," similar to the ones mentioned by Caesar, and to the ones that I consider as having something to do with the earliest meanings of O.Gmc. *bann*. Nevertheless, the historical context was already quite different from that of Caesar's time. Both Rome and the Germanic world had changed. As for the latter, in the 4th century the border between military and juridical functions must have vanished, so there no longer was any clear distinction between the sphere represented by *bann* and the one represented by *harjatuga*. In support of such a statement, I will quote from what Bosworth's dictionary of Old English gives under *heretoga* ('the leader of an army or a people, a general; dux, consul'). Among Bosworth's illustrative examples (loc. cit.), there are two remarkable quotations from Old English biblical texts, in which Moses is presented as a *heretoga* of the Jews: *Se heretoga Moyses* 'the leader Moses'; *Moises se mæra heretoga* 'Moses the great leader'.

From Antiquity to Feudalism

The materials presented above reveal the proto-feudal frame within which a Germanic juridical-rather-than-religious *bann* could come to refer to *military command, and eventually to authority of foreign feudal masters over certain regions*. The final stage of that development is perfectly reflected in the above-mentioned French *ban-bannire-banal* family, whose members were recorded

with meanings that represent “advanced feudalism.” An interesting particular thing is that, in providing an Angevin dynasty (however short-lived) for the throne of fourteenth-century Hungary, France (via the kingdom of Naples) contributed something to the establishment of advanced feudalism in Central and Southeast European territories dominated by the Hungarian crown. But the title of *bán* had already been in use in the Hungarian kingdom as early as the 11th century: “The royal council established [...] by King Stephen [I] included the mayor of the palace [...], the *banus* (governor) of Croatia, the *voivode* (prince) of Transylvania, the counts and bishops” (Lendvai 1999: 48).³² That fact and the attestation of *ban* in Southeast Europe several centuries earlier than the coming of the Angevins to Hungary exclude the possibility of a French-Neapolitan connection in regard to the appearance of a Hungarian (Latinized) *banus*. As for the possible Southeast-European spreading of the latter, even the existence of hundreds of *Ban(u)* family names in *all* parts of Romania (see below) would contradict the idea that a Hungarian feudal-aristocratic title could produce such an onomastic boom among common inhabitants of territories once controlled by the Hungarian crown. In certain regions of Romania (and of neighbouring countries, for that matter) the title of *ban* must have been applied to a multitude of representatives of an early (rather modest) juridical institution. The latter, in my opinion, had its roots in proto-feudal times during which certain Germanics had imposed themselves on communities of autochthonous Southeast Europeans. It was that proto-feudal relationship that represented the starting point for an institution specific to an early-feudal social structure. Let me continue by presenting a special case.

The situation of fourteenth-century Transylvania, ruled by representatives of Hungarian kings, is reflected in Latin-written documents which often mention the title of *banus*, as attached to names of high-positioned royal governors and members of royal councils. For instance, in a royal decree issued under King Lajos

³² We may deduce that, at that time, the title of *banus* was already applied to outstanding vassals of the Hungarian king, “especially in Croatia and Southern Hungary” (cf. DUW - *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*, s.v. *Ban*).

the Great (*Lodouicus rex*), in 1361,³³ two “magnificent men” with *banus* positions are mentioned, namely *Nicolao de Zeech* and *Nicolao de Machow* [Mačva]. But, in the same period, other documents present persons with a *banus* title of a much lower rank. One such document, issued in the same year of 1361, mentions the death of one “Peter [son] of the *banus*” (*Petrus Bani*), who had lived in the village of Ozd (in today’s Mureș county); and it was also in 1361 when a similar document was issued *pro magistro Nicolao, filio quondam Symonis, bani de Dorlaz*. The village of Dârlos (recorded as *Dorlaz* first in 1317) is now in the Sibiu county of Romania, and it is not known to have been the seat of any *banus* comparable in importance to those of Dalmatia, Croatia, Mačva, or Severin. One interesting aspect manifest in the last-mentioned Transylvanian document is a shift of title, from one generation to another: the father was known as *banus*, whereas the son bore the title of *magister*. It appears that the father had been just a local peace-time administrator of justice among the inhabitants of Dorlaz (= Dârlos). The position of *Symon de Dorlaz* probably was much more modest than the position of the two co-existent fifteenth-century *bani* of Craiova mentioned by Hasdeu (1983: 161 - see above).

To deduce that, before the firm establishment of the Hungarian feudal state, there had existed village *bani* in regions that once were ruled by Germanics is not mere speculation, if we take into account facts such as the following ones. In the same Sibiu county, at Șeica Mare, archaeologists have uncovered traces of an important earth-walled fortress built exactly in the period (5th-6th centuries) during which Gepids were politically dominant in the area under discussion.³⁴ Also, the source of an important hoard made of 4th-6th-century Eastern Roman gold coins unearthed in a neighbouring village, Șeica Mică, appears

³³ This and other documents mentioned in this part of the discussion are included in *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, C, XII, 1985 (ed. . Pascu).

³⁴ “The Gepids are thought to have been the makers of the first earth-walled Transylvanian fortresses in the 5th-6th centuries, among which worth mentioning are the first stage of the fortress of More ti (Mure county), and the earth-walled fortifications of Porumbenii Mari (Harghita county), eica Mare (Sibiu county)” - Anghel 1972: 7. The same author cautiously adds (p. 8): “The presence [at More ti] of forms of material culture of a late Gepid type does not exclude the possibility that the fortress under discussion can have belonged to the autochthonous or the Slavic population.”

to have had its source in the subsidies payed by Constantinople to the Gepids, as mentioned by Diculescu (1922: 104). It is also Diculescu (1922: 102-103) who presents historical records according to which at least one king of the Gepids, fifth-century Ardarik, minted his own gold coin, known as “Ardaricianus” – an aspect that has its own importance for this study.

Proper-Names as Arguments

In regard to onomastic proofs, the person-name *Ban* was recorded in Transylvania as early as 1205 (cf. Constantinescu 1963, s.v. *Ban*). And it is also in Transylvania where I found the highest occurrence of Romanian *Ban* and *Banu* family names in telephone directories: Cluj has 108 *Ban* and 10 *Banu* (plus 5 Hungarian *Bán*), Sibiu - 67 *Ban* and 26 *Banu*, Timișoara - 36 *Ban* and 28 *Banu* (whereas Iași, the capital of historical Moldavia, has only 26 *Banu*). Most impressively, the 2005 telephone directory of a single Transylvanian village, Poiana Sibiului (in the same Sibiu county), contains no less than 42 family names of *Ban*.

To all these I may add a list of derivative names, such as: *Bana*, *Banae*, *Bană*, *Banea*, *Baneș*, *Banica*, *Banic*, *Banicu*, *Banus*, *Băna*, *Bănău*, *Bănescu*, *Bănică*, *Bănie*, *Bănișă*, *Bănil*, *Bănilă*, *Bănișor*, *Băniș*, *Bănița*, *Bănișan*, *Banișul*, *Bănoae*, etc. (all included in Constantinescu’s onomastic dictionary, s.v. *Ban*). As I have already stated, one can hardly assume that so many Romanian names could derive from a high feudal title borrowed from Hungarian. The fact that, in very early times, *ban* was a well-known rank in Romanian villages is proved by the very presence and spreading of village names based on *ban* all over Romania. Since Transylvania produced earlier written documents (in Mediaeval Latin), it is not surprising that such village names were first recorded in that province: the earliest appear to be (according to Suci’s toponymic dictionary) the names of two villages in the Sălaj County (central Transylvania), namely *Ban* and *Bănișor* (the latter being a “diminutive” of *Ban*). Both were recorded in 1213, as *villa Bani*, and *villa Ban*, respectively. The latter is important also because, in a document of 1341, it was indicated as inhabited by Wallachians, that is, Romanians (*possessio olachalis Bantheluke* – according to the same Suci dictionary, s.v. *Bănișor*).³⁵

³⁵ In its final part, Suci’s dictionary also includes recorded names of

By its early written records, Transylvania has a special place in regard to proper names based on *ban*. But other regions of Romania, for all their lack of early historical documents, also show a multitude of such names, recorded in more recent times. Foremost among the Romanian place-names that deserve attention in this discussion is *Insula Banului* (literally ‘the Banus’ Island), an island of the Danube, on which the ruins of an early medieval fortress are still visible (cf. Anghel 1972: 68); that fortress was the power-centre of the *bani* of Severin, who were quite often mentioned in mediaeval documents. As for present-day Romanian villages of the *Ban* family, Ghinea’s dictionary (2000) includes the already mentioned *Ban* and *Bănișor*, plus three more correspondents in Transylvania (*Bănești*, *Bănicel*, *Bănița*), and a very important *Bănia* in Banat (first recorded in 1484).³⁶ Other correspondents appear in other provinces of Romania: in Moldavia (*Banu*, *Băneasa*, *Bănești*, *Lunca Banului*), Wallachia (*Băneasa*, *Bănești*, *Bănicești*), and Oltenia (*Baniu*, *Bănești*, *Bănești*, *Lunca Banului*). To these I will add *Bănești*, *Băneștii Noi*, and *Bănila*,³⁷ to be found in the Republic of Moldova (cf. Eremia et al. 1996).³⁸

One problem with Romanian specialists in onomastics is that they have viewed the proper names under discussion only as depending on the feudal institution of *bănie* (‘rank and jurisdiction of a *banus*’); that institution, in its turn, has been taken into consideration only as reflecting Hungarian influence. Nevertheless, the very richness of the Romanian onomastic family *Ban-*, as well as other facts raise serious doubts about such traditional views. We should, for instance, be very cautious about

subsequently vanished villages, such as *Ban-Tolmács* (in Crișana) - 1559, and *Banesti* (in Banat) - 1690. Such records suggest that villages with names of the *Ban* series may have been more numerous in the past. The earliest of them must originally have been, I presume, centers of juridical authority.

³⁶ The Banatian village name *B nia* practically renders the articulated form of the common noun *b nie*; and *B nie* is also a Romanian family name (see Constantinescu 1963, s.v. *Ban*).

³⁷ We cannot avoid the coincidence between the suffix of the village-name *B nila* (cf. the Romanian family-name *B nil*) and the suffix of a multitude of Gothic person-names (see *Albila*, *Argila*, *Fandila*, *Mannila*, *Tatila* etc. - see the onomastic appendix of Köbler 1989).

³⁸ *Tezaurul toponimic* 1991 includes a significant number of Romanian village-names, such as *Banul* (2), *B neasa* (5), and *B ne tii* (16), which were still in use in historical Moldavia during the 18th-19th centuries.

statements such as the ones to be found in Constantinescu's onomastic dictionary, under *Ban*, where that name is presented as "frequent in the onomastics of Romania and of neighbouring countries, after the Hungarian name of a rank, which was extended to that of a border mark (*banat*) in countries to the south [...], beginning with the 12th century." However, it is also Constantinescu (loc.cit.) who gives the following quotation from Nicolae Iorga: "Moldavian toponyms that derived from this term [*ban*] are numerous enough, although the institution of *bănie* is of a very recent date in Moldavia." Constantinescu tries (unconvincingly) to solve that confusion by assuming a massive transfer of *Ban* names as part of the intermittent flow of Romanians from Maramureş (a Northern Transylvanian region controlled by Hungary in feudal times) to Moldavia.³⁹ But, as I have already stated above, no credible explanation for the origins of *ban* and *Ban* can be reached if we confine ourselves to the times of advanced feudalism, and to the traditional Avaric-Hungarian etymology of the term under discussion.⁴⁰ At this point, some more things should be said about *ban* 'money, coin' too.

From Title to Currency

As mentioned above, according to Schubert's presentation (1982: 253) Old Bulgarian appears to have contained one single word *ban* with two meanings: 1. 'banus, governor', 2. 'small

³⁹ Constantinescu's etymological view on *Ban* was obviously influenced by the fact that, as he observes (loc.cit.), the name under discussion was first recorded in Northern Transylvania; he concludes that "it was from there that the name spread over the Carpathians." But, like Iorga before him, Constantinescu does not overlook the fact that *Banu* (or *Banul*, in its articulated form) "occurs in Moldavia, as a name, beginning with the 15th century, before the introduction of the institution [of *bănie*]." For lack of records, nobody can actually tell us how long *before* the 15th century the term *ban* and the names derived from it had been in use in Moldavia (or in other non-Transylvanian parts of Romania, for that matter). Anyway, if one assumes that it is people motion from Transylvania that can account for the quite numerous *Ban* names of Moldavia, then that motion must have been not the historically known 14th-century one, but rather an earlier (more obscure) one provoked by Hungarian conquests of the 9th-10th centuries (cf. Moldovanu 1982: 57-58).

⁴⁰ Constantinescu (loc.cit.) also sticks to that Avaric-Hungarian etymology, to which he adds that, according to Hasdeu, *ban* is a term borrowed by "Turians" from the Persians. Constantinescu's final suggestion that the Romanian names *Ban* and *Bana* might be abbreviations from the names *erban* and *erbana*, respectively, deserves no attention.

coin'. In regard to Romanian, most lexicographers have assumed that it has two separate words, *ban*¹ 'feudal title of nobility', and *ban*² 'money, small coin, division of the *leu* [Romanian currency]'. About the origin of the latter, Romanian specialists have had opinions similar to the ones expressed by Schubert. For example, in his history of Romanian, Ivănescu (2000: 429) advocates the following opinion formulated earlier by Mihăescu: the term *ban* 'coin' must have entered Romanian "after the invasion of the Mongols (1241); as a consequence of that event, the Hungarian currency disappeared, and (approximately after 1270) both in Hungary and in Romanian territories there began to circulate a type of currency known as *denarius banalis* or *ban*, minted by governors (*bani*) of Slavonia, who were vassals of the Hungarian kings."⁴¹ The same author went on by asserting that the kind of currency under discussion "was in use in our principalities [...] almost one century, until 1365, when Vlaicu, voivode of Wallachia, issued his own currency, which was also called *ban*."⁴²

Mihăescu's interpretation sounds tenable, although we cannot forget that, in a neighbouring country, an O.Bulg. *банъ* 'small coin' had been recorded (according to Schubert – see above) as early as the 10th century, that is quite long before the coming of the Mongols. And, in such a context, we cannot overlook the information about a coin called "Ardericianus", issued as early as the 5th century by King Arderik of the Gepids (see above). Such problems of chronology and of precedence remain for others to solve. What I can say at this point is that the connection between *ban* 'feudal title' and *ban* 'money' can hardly be denied, and that both the former and the latter show very old age on Romanian ground.⁴³ Also, in regard to the use of

⁴¹ Ivănescu (loc.cit.) quotes from Haralambie Mihăescu's article "Originea cuvântului *ban* 'moned'" (SCL, XVIII, 1967, p. 343-347).

⁴² See also the Tiktin dictionary, s.v. *ban*¹ and *ban*², respectively: "**ban**¹ 1. Ban (Münze) [...] Ursprünglich wohl Name einer bestimmten, von einem Banus geschlagenen Münze [...]; 2. kleinste Münze [...]; 3. Geldstück [...]; 4 Geld [...]. Et. Whrsch. *ban*²." / "**ban**² Ban(us). In der Walachei ehem. vom Fürsten ernannten Statthalter der kleinen Walachei (*Banul Craiovei*) [...]. Et. Magy. *bán*."

⁴³ In regard to *ban* 'money', I must observe that, along a metaphorical line, that word has produced quite a number of phrases in Romanian, such as the following ones (selected from MDA, II, 2001, s.v. *ban*³): *a strânge bani albi pentru zile negre* 'to save money' (literally 'to gather white money for black days'); *a umbla cu doi bani în trei pungii* 'to try to deceive somebody by something' (literally 'to move

both *ban* ‘feudal title’ and *ban* ‘money’ in the Romanian principalities after the 14th century, I have found the two terms side by side in a Romanian document of 1603 (Hasdeu 1983: 170 – my italics): “fost-au dat popa Stanciul în mână Hrizii portarul și jupănesii lui Samfirăi și *banului* Andreiu călugărul *bani gata* aspri 20.000.”⁴⁴ (Andreiu is obviously someone who had been a *banus*, and who subsequently became a monk; as for *bani gata*, the formula still means ‘cash’ in today’s Romanian.)

I will now return to Ciorănescu and to what appears to be his dim intuition of a Germanic origin of Rmn. *ban*. Ciorănescu was not in favor of a relationship between *ban* ‘feudal title’ and *ban* ‘money’, which are treated as two distinct words in his dictionary. Rather intriguing is that whereas he (as mentioned above) joins the traditional opinion about an Avaric origin of the former term, in the case of the latter he has very peculiar views and gives surprising details. Among other things, Ciorănescu mentions that there is not only Bulg. *ban* ‘small coin’, but also a plural form *bani* used by Megleno-Romanians. As for the origin of Rmn. *ban* ‘coin, money’, Ciorănescu openly rejects the connection with *ban* ‘feudal title’ (as proposed by Hasdeu and Tiktin), and he prefers to consider that the term is of “unknown origin.” Nevertheless, the same author immediately adds (my translation):

Probably what we have in this case is the Germanic word *ban*, M.Lat. *bannus* ‘proclamation, banns’, which came to mean, among many other things, ‘fine for crimes against authority’, or ‘contribution paid to the feudal lord’ (cf. examples from the 7th-12th centuries with Niemeyer 82-3). The change of sense might be explained through the necessity of paying fines by cash, in a period in which currency was not usual. What remains to be clarified is the way of the borrowing; it

around with two coins in three purses’); *a umbla în banii lui* ‘to move around arrogantly’ (literally ‘to move around in his own money’). There also are Romanian plant-names such as the compound *banul-popii* (‘priest’s penny’), or the diminutive derivatives *b ni or*, *b nule*, *b nu*, which obviously allude to the coin-like shapes of the flowers of the designated plants.

⁴⁴ In rough translation: “the sum of twenty thousand aspers in cash has been given by Stanciul the priest to the hand of Hrizia the porter and to his wife Samfira and to the *banus* Andreiu the monk.”

was probably done via Hungarian.⁴⁵

Had Ciorănescu focused more on the “M.Lat. *bannus*” connection, and on the capital semantic sphere of “feudal authority,” rather than on the “fine paid by cash”, he could have drawn a more credible conclusion on the origin of both *ban*² ‘money’ and *ban*¹ ‘feudal title’, whose source is undeniably Old Germanic.

Peculiar Meanings and Derivations

Whereas in Western Romance the acquisition of an Old Germanic *bann* – mainly via Mediaeval Latin *bannus* (*bannum*) – has been generally assumed (as reflected in dictionaries), the similar acquisition of *the same* Old Germanic term in the Late Vulgar Latin used in Southeast Europe, or in proto-Romanian is a more difficult problem. To blame for that situation is mainly the lack of documents from the period (5th-7th centuries) during which Romanian was being shaped as a distinct historical language. Nevertheless, even in the absence of documents, Romanian provides, by itself, sufficient indications in the matter under discussion. Several clues to the very old age of *ban* in Romanian have already been mentioned – see, for instance, the numerous Romanian proper-names of the *Ban* family discussed above. Besides those, and besides the series of derivatives transparently derived from *ban*² ‘coin, money’ (see above), there is a multitude of Romanian derivatives from *ban*¹, such as *băneasă* ‘wife of a *banus*’, *băneasă* ‘name of a Romanian folk dance’, *băni*¹ ‘to grant the title of banus to someone’, *bănie* ‘jurisdiction or residence of a *banus*’, *bănişor* ‘boyar of a rank lower than that of a *banus*’, etc. (all to be found as separate entries in MDA, I, 2001).

There also is, in Romanian, a seemingly separate term, a verb whose obsolete-regional meanings I consider to be of capital importance for this demonstration. The verb is given in MDA as *băni*², with three meanings (the first marked as obsolete, the other two as regional): ‘1. to negotiate; 2. not to leave somebody in peace; 3. to repent’. MDA presents that verb neither as derived from Rmn. *ban*, nor as based on the

⁴⁵ The final part of the statement is confusing, taking into consideration that among the examples given by Ciorănescu (loc.cit.) there is a Hung *bány* ‘coin’, presented by him as a borrowing from Romanian.

Hungarian borrowing *bán* 'feudal title', but as based on the Hungarian verb *bánni*. The dictionary gives no meaning for the assumed source-word, so I may take into consideration two Hungarian verbal radicals that are separately given in Kelemen 1964: *bán* (in its unsuffixed form), with the meanings 'to regret, to feel remorseful', and *bán/ik* 'to behave in a certain way (with somebody), to treat (somebody) in a certain way, to handle'. As I will demonstrate below, the meanings of those Hungarian terms reflect more recent semantic shifts (towards more general-abstract meanings), which meant a getting away from the semantic sphere of the Old Germanic source-term *bann*. Rmn. *băni*² (especially by its first and second meanings) and several other Romanian related terms (see below) show correspondence with that Old Germanic semantic sphere, whose principal reference is *to an archaic juridical system*.

In her presentation of the correspondents of Hung. *bán*, Schubert (1982) misses several important things. First, although she assumes (p. 161) a transfer such as Hung *bán(ni)* > Rmn. *bănu* 'to suspect' ('argwöhnen'),⁴⁶ she proposes no connection between the latter and the family of *bán* 'feudal title'. Also, she does not mention the existence of Rmn. *băni*² 'to negotiate, not to leave somebody in peace, to repent' (as a relative of both *ban* and *bănu*). Moreover, after having finished her presentation of correspondents of Hung. *bán* 'feudal title', Schubert passes to those of Hung. *bánt* 'to bother, mistreat, hinder, plague' ('behelligen, mißhandeln, behindern, plagen') without assuming that, etymologically, she actually remained on the same ground (that is, on the ground of etymological relatives of Hung. *bán* 'feudal title'). As Schubert's states, *bánt* (first recorded in Hungarian in the 14th century) appears to be a

⁴⁶ I will not insist here on the fact that Schubert and other specialists (see especially Pu cariu 1976: 275 and Rosetti 1986: 383) perpetuated an opinion according to which the Romanian infinitive ending *-ui* has its origin in South Slavic *-ovat*. About the latter, specialists have considered – by a rather complicated logic – that it was attached to certain Hungarian verbs that entered Romanian *only* after having passed through South Slavic (as supposed in the cases of Rmn. *bănu* and *bântui*). What appears to have been overlooked is that there is as a fundamental verbal ending *-oj* in Albanian (a language that has quite many substratal ties with Romanian). Alb. *-oj* and Rmn. *-ui* appear to be etymologically related not to Slav. *-ovat* proper, but rather to the formant *-uj-* that occurs in Slavic verbs of the *-ovat* category (see Schmalstieg 1983: 49 on Slavic verbs "with an infinitive in *-ovati*, which alternates with a present stem in *-u-*").

Hungarian “factitive derivative” from the above-mentioned Hung. *bán* ‘to regret’ (‘bedauern’), which the same author presents as a word of “unknown etymology.” Nevertheless, a quite big family of European terms amply demonstrates that Hung. *bánt* is just an Old Germanism that reached Hungarian through a Romance intermediation (or also a Slavic one). I take into consideration that *bant-* can easily be regarded as just a variant of *band-*,⁴⁷ which is contained in the series of Romance terms that resulted from the Latin-Germanic conflation of *bannum* + *bandum* (see above). Well-known words of the family under discussion are It. *bando* ‘decree, conviction, bannishment’.⁴⁸ The Friulan correspondent of It. *bando* is *bant* (under which the Friulan dictionary of Pirona et al. 1977 also gives *mandâ in bant* ‘mandare al bando, bandire’ and *di bant* ‘inutilmente’). The existence of a Friulan term (of Old Germanic origin) with a form like *bant* and a meaning like ‘banishment’ can be a good starting point for an explanation of Hung. *bánt*. As for the Romanian verb *bântui* (1st pers. sg. indic. pres. *bântui*, with initial stress), that Romanian term cannot possibly come from Hungarian, for several reasons.

First of all, phonetically speaking, one could hardly assume that Hungarian loans in Romanian⁴⁹ could be affected by a very early phonetic change, which marked Romanian terms genetically inherited from Latin (e.g. *blandum* > *blând*, *rancidus* > *rânced*), but which did not mark early Slavic loans (such as Rmn. *hrană* ‘food’ and *rană* ‘wound’ - see above). No doubt, Hung. *bánt* and Rmn. *bântui* are related (first of all by the ultimate Old Germanic origin that they appear to have in common); but the latter shows very old age on Romanian ground, not only in its

⁴⁷ A shift like *d* > *t* poses no problem, since it may simply reflect the reception (by a non-Germanic ear) of a specific Germanic devoicing of stops in final positions – cf. Germ. *Band* and *Brand*, pronounced /bant/ and /brant/, respectively. In that respect, the form of Friul. *bant* ‘bando’ may be compared to those of two other Old Germanisms preserved in dialectal Occitan (Provençal), namely *bort* ‘bordo’ and *rant* ‘rando’ (as presented in Pons/ Genre 1997).

⁴⁸ An important derivative of It. *bando* is *bandire* ‘to proscribe’, which, in its turn, produced *bandito* ‘exile, outlaw, bandit’. Through various intermediations, It. *bandito* became a pan-European term: cf. Span. *bandido*, Fr. *bandit*, Eng. *bandit*, as well as Rmn. *bandit* (a recent borrowing from French, or Italian, or both).

⁴⁹ See Király 1990: 117-119 and 185 about difficulties encountered by specialists who have considered Romanian words such as *b nat* and *bântui* as derived from Hungarian.

shape, but also in its (non-Hungarian) meanings, which are much more complex than those of Hung. *bán* 'to regret' and of the latter's derivatives. Schubert did not assume any etymological tie between Hung. *bán* 'title of nobility' and Hung. *bán* 'to regret' (which she sees as basis of *bánt*); but such a tie results from the very illustrative material given in Schubert 1982: 257-258. In that respect, obviously *juridical* senses are visible in both Serbian-Croatian and Romanian correspondents of Hung. *bánt*. The source and original meaning of the latter could be clarified by mere reference to Serb.-Croat. *bantovati* 'molestare, impedire', a term that was recorded "in kroatischen Rechtsverordnungen seit dem 15. Jahrhundert" - according to Schubert 1982: 257. The same author (loc.cit.) mentions other old Serbian-Croatian terms of the same lexical family: *bantovanje* 'molestia, vexatio, impedimentum'; *bantovatelj* 'vexator' and (simplest but not least) *banta* 'molestia'.⁵⁰

Semantically, Rmn. *bântui* is a quite complex term, and it shows more similarity to Serbian-Croatian *bant-* correspondents than that to Hung. *bánt* 'to bother, mistreat, hinder, plague' (supposedly derived from *bán* 'to regret'). Rmn. *bântui* (first recorded at the beginning of the 17th century)⁵¹ has the following meanings: 'to bother, haunt (about evil spirits), pester, pillage (about invaders), ravage, damage, put to trial, punish'. (Among other things, DEX, s.v. *bântui*, gives the Romanian obsolete oath *Să mă bântuie Dumnezeu!* - "May God punish me!") The word under discussion has several important derivatives: *bântuială* 'impediment, plunder, trial, temptation', *bântuire* 'persecution, trouble, sorrow, pillage, devastation, damage', and *bântuitor* 'oppressor'. The earliest recorded meanings of Rmn. *bântui* reveal a connection between that word and the lexical family represented by Romanian *băni¹*, *băni²*, *bănu* (see above), as well as *bănat* (commonly presented as based on Hung. *bánat* 'sorrow'). That connection is sustained not exactly by the (obviously more recent) Romanian meanings that correspond to Hungarian ones ('mistreat, bother, regret'), but rather by the

⁵⁰ To those I will add Polish *banova* and *bantova* (recorded in the 17th century), which are given in the Brückner dictionary as Hungarian loans (based on Hung. *bán* and *bánt*, respectively).

⁵¹ The Bucharest Bible of 1688 has *bîntui* 'to trouble, torment' and *bîntuial* 'trial, temptation' (see glossary of the 1997 edition).

obsolete meanings that correspond to the *juridical sphere* observed by Schubert in the case of the above-mentioned Serbian-Croatian lexical family. Here are those early meanings of the Romanian terms under discussion, as given in a dictionary of 17th-18th-century Romanian (Costinescu et al., 1987 - my translations): (1) **bănat** ‘accusation, imputation, reprimand, remonstrance, suspicion’ (besides the more recent meanings of ‘sorrow, regret, remorse, anger, trouble, spite’); (2) **băni** ‘to punish’ (besides ‘to negotiate’, and besides ‘to grant someone the title of *banus*’, a meaning usually presented as belonging to a separate, homonymic term); (3) **bănuî**¹ - same as **băni**; (4) **bănuî**² ‘to suspect’ (besides ‘to regret, to envy, to get angry’); (5) **bănuială** ‘suspicion’ (besides ‘regret, remorse’). In fact, even in present-day Romanian *bănuî* and *bănuială* still refer to the notion of “suspicion” (juridically too). And, in this context, we should not forget about the above-mentioned Rmn. *bântuî*, which is currently used with the meanings ‘to haunt, to roam’, but which earlier meant ‘to bother, damage, put to trial, punish’,⁵² as presented in MDA. Without the above-mentioned old meanings we would not have any clear arguments in favor of a connection between, on the one hand, Rmn. *ban* ‘feudal title’ (with its deduced reference to a pre- and proto-feudal juridical system of Old Germanic extraction) and, on the other hand, the old juridical meanings shown by the Romanian terms presented above. Were they mere borrowings from Hungarian, they would show the more general-abstract meanings (‘regret, remorse, sorrow’) of their Hungarian correspondents, which appear to reflect more recent semantic shifts.⁵³

Probable Macedo-Romanian and Albanian Correspondents

In addition to all the arguments taken into consideration above, there is a more complicated matter that should be discussed here, at least as part of a working hypothesis. Whereas

⁵² Hasdeu (1983: 181) gives the text of a Romanian decree of 1606 (passed in favor of an orphaned young lady), which recommends, in an archaic formulation: *aceast s rac Udrica s no u b întoiasc nemene* (in plain present-day English, “no one should *bother* this poor Udrica” – my translation).

⁵³ My intention is far from a denial of Hungarian influences on Romanian. What I mean to say in this demonstration is just that Romanian must have contained several important Old Germanisms of the *ban* family (with pre-Hungarian juridical meanings) at the time of the earliest contacts and exchanges between Romanian and Hungarian.

Megleno-Romanian has *bani* (a plural), as name of currency (cf. Ciorănescu 2001, s.v. *ban*), Macedo-Romanian has no obvious correspondents of the Daco-Romanian *ban-băni-bănu-i-bântui* family. Nevertheless, Macedo-Romanian (also known as Aromanian, or Vlahic) has a family of words provably connected to O.Gmc. *ban(n)* at a more profound level.

In his history of Romanian, after having presented Rmn. *ban* ‘feudal title’ as a “Serbo-Croatian element,” Ivănescu (2000: 429) rejects a particular opinion expressed by Sacerdoțeanu⁵⁴ in regard to an etymological relation between *ban* and the solid lexical family of Macedo-Romanian (M.Rmn.) *bană* ‘life’⁵⁵ and *bănare* ‘living’. As a matter of fact, Sacerdoțeanu (as quoted by Ivănescu) used those Macedo-Romanian terms as arguments against a Hungarian-Serbian-Croatian origin of Daco-Romanian (D.Rmn.) *ban*. Worth mentioning at this point is that, in his dictionary of Macedo-Romanian (1974, s.v. *bană*), Papahagi expresses his doubt about an earlier proposal of a derivation of M.Rmn. *bană* from a “North Albanian *bane* ‘demeure, habitation’.”⁵⁶ Papahagi observes that an Alb. *bane* does not appear in dictionaries of Albanian. Actually, Papahagi was not right in suggesting a lack of Albanian correspondents of M.Rmn. *bană* (see below); nor was Ivănescu right in his blunt rejection of Sacerdoțeanu’s view on the existence of a relationship between *ban* and *bană*.

Papahagi’s dictionary (with meanings given also in French) contains a Macedo-Romanian lexical family that includes: *bană* ‘1. vie, train de la vie; 2. paix’; *bănare* ‘viețuire; action de vivre, d’exister; existence; train de la vie’; *bănat* ‘vécu’; *bănată* ‘train de la vie’; *bănedzu* ‘vivre’. I will point out the curious fact that, in the case of the base-word *bană*, only the sense of ‘viață’ (‘life’) is given in Romanian, whereas in French Papahagi adds the important secondary meaning of ‘peace’ (‘paix’). The

⁵⁴ Ivănescu (loc.cit.) quotes from an article by Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, namely “Originea baniei și a ‘banilor’ la români,” first published in *Ramuri*, IV, Nr. 3, 36/2, p. 19, 1967 (republished in 1971).

⁵⁵ That *ban* is a term with a very solid position in Macedo-Romanian (Aromanian) is proved by the fact that a recently founded journal of the Aromanians in Bulgaria bears the name of *Bana Armâneasc* (“The Aromanian Life” - cf. Kahl 2006: 150).

⁵⁶ In his *Limba română*, I (1976: 263), Pu cariui gives “*ban* ‘via’ < alb. *bane* ‘locuin’.”

importance of that secondary meaning results directly from at least two illustrative Macedo-Romanian sentences given by Papahagi (s.v. *bană*): (1) *nu-n'i da bană un minut* [rendered in Daco-Romanian, that is, in Standard Romanian, as: *nu-mi dă pace un minut* = literally, “he won’t give me peace one minute”]; (2) *n'i-am 'nă soacră – nu-n'i da bană* [D.Rmn.: *îmi am o soacră – nu-mi dă pace* = literally, “I have got myself a mother-in-law – she won’t give me peace”].⁵⁷ To mark is that in those two cases M.Rmn. *bană* is translated by D.Rmn. *pace*. Also remarkable is the fact that Papahagi’s dictionary contains no etymological correspondent of D.Rmn. *pace* ‘peace’ (< Lat. *pacem* < *pax*). I may assume that, under certain historical circumstances, *bană* replaced the inherited Latin term for ‘peace’ in Macedo-Romanian. And, in fact, *bană* also produced an obvious limitation of usage in the case of the inherited M.Rmn. *yeață* ‘life, existence, eternity, being, living creature’ (cf. D.Rmn. *viață* ‘life’ < Lat. **vivitia* < *vivus*). About the latter Macedo-Romanian word under discussion, Papahagi (s.v. *yeață*) observes: “Today, with the sense of ‘life’, this word does no longer occur, since it has been replaced by *bană*.”

In regard to Papahagi’s already mentioned doubts about Albanian correspondents, I consider that M.Rmn. *bană* should be referred to a whole lexical family of Albanian, including: *banesë* ‘dwelling house, residence, lodging’, *banim* ‘dwelling, residence’, *banoj* ‘to dwell, to inhabit’, *banor* ‘inhabitant, resident’, *banues* ‘inhabitant’, *banueshëm* ‘inhabitable’, all given in the Duro/Hysa dictionary (1990). Besides those, there also is an Alb. *banë* ‘shepherd’s hut’ (with the prefixed derivative *tëbanë*), which I found in the Kostallari dictionary (1984). It is quite evident that, even without the attestation of a “North Albanian *bane*” proper, the Macedo-Romanian term *bană* does have correspondents in Albanian. Also, the key to an etymological solution for both the above-mentioned Albanian lexical family and the one of M.Rmn. *bană* is provided by the latter’s secondary (but certainly older) meaning of ‘peace’. In my opinion, both M.Rmn. *bană* ‘life, peace’ and Alb. *banoj* ‘to dwell’ ultimately derive from an Old Germanic source, just as

⁵⁷ For a comparison, see the above-mentioned meaning ‘not to leave somebody in peace’ of the Rmn. verb *b ni*’.

Rmn. *ban* and O.Fr. *ban* do, for that matter. It is not difficult to reconstruct a semantic shift such as: ‘life ruled by peace-time regulations’ > ‘peaceful life’ > ‘peace’ and/or ‘life’. There arise at least two questions. (1) Under what circumstances could ancestors of (Macedo-)Romanians and Albanians adopt an Old Germanic term of such importance? (2) Why should the evolution of that borrowing show such a difference between, on the one hand, Albanian and Macedo-Romanian (the latter showing, however, preservation of the older meaning ‘peace’), and, on the other hand, Daco-Romanian (in which the *ban* family went along lines visible in Serbian-Croatian and, partially, in Hungarian)? The only tentative answer I can give here is that, in regard to the preservation of a *ban* family of Old Germanisms, Albanian and Macedo-Romanian may have been more strongly marked by the post-Hunnish *Pax Gepidica* of the fifth-sixth centuries.

Most significant historical-archaeological details about the *Gepidenzeit* are to be found in Diculescu 1922, as well as in the recent article Dumitrașcu/ Sfrengu 2006, from which I extracted the following passage (p. 212, my translation):

The battle of Nedao had [...] two other consequences for the fortune of the north-western party of Dacia during the 5th-6th centuries (454-567). After having defeated the Huns and, concomitantly, after having occupied the whole of Dacia (*totius Daciae fines*), the Gepids demanded from the Roman Empire peace and yearly gifts (*nisi pacem et annua sollemnia*). For a time, they set up in Dacia something that we might call *Pax Gepidica*. After the victory, under the *Pax Gepidica* there was a spreading of Germanic (= Gepidic) culture of a *Nowa Huta-Igolomia* type in the “country” of the Huns, as well as, insularly and sporadically, in “the whole of Dacia.” That domination, however nominal, could naturally revitalize the economic-social life of local Daco-Roman communities that had “seized up” due to the Hunnish shock and the Ostrogothic “barrack-like” rule.

Whether we accept that presentation wholly, or only partially, nobody can deny that the establishment of a Gepidic state, as *imitatio imperii* over a vast Danubian-Carpathian area, implied establishment of peaceful life, after about two centuries of trouble in both Ancient Dacia and Pannonia. Therefore I

assume it was during that period that ancestors of Albanians (Illyro-Pannonians?) and of Romanians came to learn a Germanic term of the *ban(n)* family, which subsequently, in their own languages, suffered the above-mentioned semantic shift.

In the Danubian area taken into consideration here (that is, basically, also the area in which the title of *ban* survived best through the Middle Ages), the Germanic source-words of both *ban* and *bană* could, however, have been introduced not only by the Gepids, but also by the Ostrogoths. In that respect, we should take into consideration the fact that Theoderic (“the Great” to-be) had ruled Macedonia, as a friend of the Roman Empire (474-488), before he moved his people to Italy and turned Ravenna into an Ostrogothic power-centre. Moreover, it was also in Theoderic’s time when the Ostrogothic domination extended from Italy to Dalmatia and to Pannonia Secunda (after Sirmium was taken by the Ostrogoths from the Gepids, in 504). That development, which lasted until around 535, is minutely presented by Wozniak (1984). The latter’s observations can, in fact, directly sustain my idea of a possible semantic shift from ‘(Germanic) rule-of-law’ to ‘peaceful life’, then to ‘peace’ and/or ‘life’ (as visible in M.Rmn. *bană*), and even further to ‘habitation’ (as manifest in the case of the Albanian *ban-* family of words presented above).

Wozniak’s article shows how, during the 490’s, King Theoderic managed to preserve “peace and order in Dalmatia” (p. 375).⁵⁸ The king was represented by a specially appointed Ostrogothic “count” (*comes*), who practically acted as governor of the province. Of course, it would have been great for us to know how the title of that governor sounded in Gothic too, not only in Latin. Nevertheless, what Wozniak observes (p. 377-378) about the position and doings of that Ostrogothic official quite clearly foreshadows the *ban* of later times:

Because the duties of the *comes provinciae* were primarily military and police in nature and because Theoderic wished to preserve a functioning Roman administration, the province of Dalmatia

⁵⁸ Wozniak insists on presenting those favorable circumstances in similar terms at other points of the article: “Dalmatia had peace, order and prosperity” (p. 376); “the Romans [...] would recognize the contribution of the Goths to the general peace and prosperity through their provision of military defense” (p. 377); “under the Ostrogoths the province of Dalmatia prospered” (p. 381).

continued to be governed as it always had been, though the whole was subordinated to the Gothic *comes* of the province. Roman *consulares* were still appointed, but their administrative functions in Dalmatia seem to have been limited. Probably the most important Roman official was the *princips Dalmatiarum* [...]. The *princips* seems always to have been a Roman. He was also a jurist, as his principal duties centered on his control of the juridical system for the native Roman population.

If we take into consideration that, during the period under discussion, the Ostrogoths also strove to achieve “the restoration of order in the interior of Dalmatia” (p. 380), that is, in regions inhabited mostly by a population that had remained un-Romanized (at least as regards glottal identity), we can understand how both “the native Roman population” and ancestors of the Albanians could come to learn some Gothic proto-feudal terminology.

In regard to survivals of *ban* Germanisms, I do not exclude the possibility of borrowing (in either direction) between the proto-Romance population and the proto-Albanians of the area under discussion. We simply do not dispose of sufficient data that might enable a decisive answer in that respect. What I am pretty sure of, however, is that an ultimately Old Germanic source for the lexical families of both M.Rmn. *bană* and Alb. *banoj* is a credible etymological solution. It remains for us to explain not only why Albanian is so close only to Macedo-Romanian in the particular case under discussion, but also why the Daco-Romanian *băni*, *bănat*, *bănu*, and *bântui* (as well as some Serbian-Croatian correspondents of the last one) still recall Old Germanic juridical meanings, whereas Macedo-Romanian *bană*, *bănare*, *bănat*, *bănată*, and *bănedzu* got away from an originally juridical semantic sphere. I presume that what we have here can be regarded as proof of a very early separation between Macedo-Romanians and Daco-Romanians, and of a closer (and longer) relationship between early Daco-Romanians (or their direct ancestors) and Germanic populations that continued to make use of *bann* and its derivatives as juridical terms.

General Conclusions

What results from the demonstration above is, first of all,

that Germanic *bann* terms developed from primitive Indo-European ones that referred to very archaic religious-judicial notions. Such terms were specific to times in which commandments and laws were believed to be transmitted by divinities to humans, through the voice of exceptional (or professional) individuals. In course of time, such individuals were in turn medicine men, prophets, priest-kings, and tribal magistrates. The last two stages represent the times during which the actual Germanic *Völkerwanderung* began. When mere destruction and plunder was replaced by profitable conquest and occupation, Germanic tribal magistrates (probably still having some religious prestige too) came to dominate not only the life of their own tribes, but also the life of non-Germanic populations that came under Germanic control. Such was the period in which non-Germanic people of Central-Eastern Europe became familiar with Germanic juridical terms of the *bann* family.

A territory with the name of *Banat* (< *banatus*, made of an Old Germanic root and a Latin suffix – cf. *ducatus* < *dux*) survived through the Middle Ages into modern times exactly in the Danubian-Carpathian area once covered by the kingdom of the Gepids. Therefore one can assume that Latinized forms like *banus* and *banatus* were already in use among speakers of Vulgar Latin (or, already, of proto-Romance) in areas controlled by the Gepids. However, we cannot exclude other Germanic idioms (such as those of the Goths, Langobards, or Vandals, or even of the earlier Bastarnae) as sources of the *ban-* and *bant-* terms that were to survive in Central and Southeast Europe. Those terms can have been perpetuated by local populations after the destruction of the Gepidic kingdom, then through the times dominated by Avars and Slavs. When they moved south, the ancestors of South-Slavs, notably those of the Serbians and the Croatians, must have borrowed (from pre-Slavic populations of Danubian-Carpathian regions) Germanisms of the *ban* and *bant* types, which subsequently became bases for peculiar mediaeval Serbian-Croatian juridical terms, with clear correspondences in Romanian (see above).

After having adopted a series of *bann-* and *band-* terms directly from Old Germanic intruders, Italians also learned about a *ban* title (It. *banò*) from their Croatian neighbours.

Hungarians did something similar after the conquest of their new homeland; that is, they borrowed the source-words of their *bán* and *bánt* from their Slavic and Romance⁵⁹ subjects and/or neighbours. In later times, after Hung. *bán* had developed meanings that reflected an advanced-feudal hierarchy, the Hungarian title under discussion could, of course, act as a reinforcement of *ban* terms in all the languages of the Hungarian-controlled part of Central-Eastern Europe. But, as demonstrated above that reinforcement could hardly stand for and origin of the mass of Romanian *Ban* names, which reflect a pre-Hungarian situation.

Romanian material is dominant in this article not because the present author knows *that* better. The main reason is that, besides the just-mentioned onomastic argument, the unity of the Romanian terms belonging to the *ban-bănat-băni-bănuî-bântui* family is most coherent of all, as they all still reflect an archaic juridical system. And it is quite obvious that, in their earliest meanings, those Romanian words are closest to what Old Germanic *bann* stood for, before it came to refer to advanced-feudal realities.

No doubt, several aspects (such as the time and place of the development from *ban* 'high social position' to *ban* 'currency', or of the development from something like **banna* 'rule-of-law' to *bană* 'peaceful life') should be further clarified in the future. For the time being, I am sure of at least one major thing, namely of the Old Germanic origin of the *ban* lexical family that has representatives in both West-Romance and East-Romance.

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⁵⁹ For the source of Hung. *bán* I have in mind a pre-Hungarian usage of such a term by Slavs and Romanians living in territories subsequently occupied by Hungarians, whereas for Hung. *bánt* I will not exclude an Alpine Romance source, mainly since a term *bant* is still in use in Friulan (see above).

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