

Research on *Interferenzonomastik* in Roman Gaul*

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Jürgen Zeidler

0. Previous research by Altay Coşkun and myself concentrated very much on personal names in the family of the Bordelaise poet and grammarian, Ausonius (Coşkun/Zeidler 2003). It could be shown that this material is extraordinary in several regards. Contrary to most personal names known from Roman Gaul, it can be arranged chronologically, regionally, and prosopographically. Moreover, some statements in the poet's literary works can be seen as testifying to his self-conception as a Roman and as a Gaul.

Future research will be concerned with similar micro-contexts. One of our next projects will be the proper names attested in the late Iron Age and early Roman trading centre on Magdalensberg in Carinthia, Austria. From about 50 BC to AD 50, the mountain was inhabited by local people of the 'Norican' tribes and Roman traders, and from 15 BC on, also by administrators of the newly established province Noricum. The epigraphical evidence of more than fifty years of excavations (Piccottini 1988; *id.*/Vetters 1999) gives a good impression of the personal names used by a local population within a relatively short period of time. Norican anthroponyms have already been collected and studied by historians and linguists (Alföldy 1974; Lochner von Hüttenbach 1988; Hainzmann 1996), thus solid groundwork for our subject matter has already been done.

In this paper, I am going to present three aspects of our research: Firstly, some important implications of onomastic studies in 'Celtic provinces' on the knowledge of continental Celtic languages, in particular Gaulish, will be addressed. Secondly, some examples of the name bearers' awareness of the meaning of names will be adduced. And thirdly, an outline of an approach will be given to estimate and possibly even to calculate the degree of intercultural exchange.

1. The first point, linguistic implications, is so to say a by-product of onomatology, but in return, it improves our understanding of the ancient naming practices.

*) This is a little altered version of the paper read at the *First Round Table*. The presentation of the methodical premisses in paragraph 3.2 has been extended and illustrated.

I shall give you two examples from recent research, one from Celtic phonetics, touching Indo-European reconstruction, and one from the Gaulish lexicon.

1.1 From the Gaulish personal name *Com-argus* (*KGPN* 57; 134; 178; *GPN* 184; *DLG* 54) and Old Irish *arg* (masculine *o*-stem, *LEIA* A-87), a Common Celtic lexeme and name element **argos* ‘warrior, hero’ has been derived as early as 1894 by Whitley Stokes (1894: 18). Perhaps a further name can be added to these: *Argicius*, from **arg-ik-jo-* ‘descending from a hero/heroic man’, if this is not from *argio-* ‘white, shining’ (*DLG* 54). *Argicius* recorded as the name of Ausonius’s maternal grand- and great-grandfather and as *episcopus Antipolitanus* in 524 (*CCSL* 148A, 45; 17f). A change of the vowel in *arg-i-* instead of *arg-o-* can easily be explained by the use of the (originally compound) suffix *-iko-* (Russell 1990: 13–15), the *-i-* of which replaced the stem vowel *-o-*. Alternatively, the change could be seen as an impact of Latin, where the linking vowel *-i-* is well attested. Similar cases are recorded e.g. in *Epored-i-rix* instead of *Epored-o-rix* (*KGPN* 91). Old Irish *arg* is taken to be cognate to Greek ἀρχός ‘chief, guide’, which is derived from the Indo-European root **reg^h-* ‘to perk, sit up’ (*LIV* 498) in zero grade with stressed *o*-stem ending: **r^g^h-ó-s*. Sonantic **r* develops regularly to *ar* in Greek (except Aeolic and, in part, Mycenaean, where the outcome is *or*). In Celtic, however, the reconstructed **r^g^h-ó-s* would result in ***rigos*, not in *argos* (McCone 1996: 52). In order to account for the anlaut *ar-* in Celtic, an Indo-European initial laryngeal must be assumed. Greek *a*-colouring is usually thought to point to **h₂*. Kümmel and Rix, the authors of *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben*, mentioned the existence of a laryngeal as a possibility in a footnote, but they did not see a compulsory proof. So the evidence from Celtic, which is in part onomastic, helps to precise the Indo-European reconstruction as **h₂reg^h-* and the nominal derivation as **h₂r^g^h-ó-s*. The latter is originally an adjective, a part of speech preserved both in Greek and in Old Irish. I will dwell on this somewhere else in greater detail.

1.2 My second example is from the Gaulish lexicon. In our joint paper on ‘cover names’, Altay Coşkun and I suggested to explain the frequent personal name element *aiu-* as an expression for ‘longevity, (long) lifespan’. It occurs e.g. in *Aio*, *A[e?]a*, *Ai(i)u*, *Aiuni* (dative), *Aiuccio*, *Aiucia*, *Aiulo* etc. In the meantime, our proposal has been accepted by Xavier Delamarre and found its way into the second edition of his *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise* (2003: 36). I suggested to derive *aiu-* from Indo-European **h₂eiū-/h₂eju-* ‘life force’ hence ‘long life or time span’, cf. Greek αἰ(φ)ών (*IEW* 17f). The Celtic names probably refer to longevity in the first stance. The motif of long life or old age is also

present in the name elements *seno-* ‘old (age)’, e.g. *Seno-carus* ‘loving old age’, *Seno-condus* ‘having the wit of an old one’ (*KGPN* 266f; *LHEB* 325), as well as *sētlo-* from older **saitlo-* ‘seed, lifespan’ (*IEW* 889f; as to the verb *LIV* 517f), e.g. in *Setlo-cenia* (*KGPN* 267, *LHEB* 325) ‘(goddess) of long life’, cf. Welsh *hoedl* ‘lifespan’, Old Latin *saiklom*, Classical *saeculum*, Lithuanian *sėklà* ‘seed’. The frequency of names like *Aeionius/-ia*, *Aeternus* etc. in Gaul is probably to be understood as a reflex of indigenous names with *aiu-*, *seno-* or *sētlo-*.

So it is no exaggeration to say that onomastic studies contribute substantially to linguistics. Another important point of concern is social history, and this is the domain of my second aspect.

2.1 Situations of language contact and of onomastic overlapping often pose the problem of assigning names to certain onomastic systems. This is not accidental, of course, but reflects the very intention of naming practices in a multi-cultural society. A specialist in Latin onomastics, for instance, would argue that *Cato* is a purely Roman cognomen (from *catus* ‘prudent’). A Celtic scholar with an understanding of cultural syncretism, however, could object to this that *Cato* is very similar in sound to Gaulish *catu-* ‘battle’, which is a frequent element in native onomastics; to quote just a few of them: *Catonos*, *Catusso*, *Catusius*, even *Catulus*, and compound names such as *Catumarus* (Welsh *Cadfawr*), *Caturix* and *Catuvolcus* (*KGPN* 167–169; *GPN* 171–175; *DLG* 111). Bernard Rémy (*NICR* 77) takes *Cato* to be Latin, but acknowledges *Catianus* and *Catiola* as Gaulish. The reason for the different classification seems to be that *Cato* has a Latin etymology and names in *Cati-* obviously have not. But this distinction is only superficial, and one-sided too, because *Cato* (*n*-stem) could also be a rendering of Gaulish *Catus*, adapted to the Latin consonantic declension. So the principle, to explain names as Roman as far as linguistically possible, is not applicable for methodical reasons. A possible reference to *both* linguistic and onomastic systems, the Latin *and* the Gaulish, must be considered. Sarah Forier, in the same volume (*NICR* 511–514), has rightly done so and discusses, in addition to the lexemes mentioned, Celtic *catto-* ‘cat’ and Latin *catulus* ‘small animal’. So, in the case of *Cato*, both cultural connections are imaginable. On the one hand, we have to account for the possibility that a Gaulish family or community chose a Gaulish name which alludes to a Latin one, thus compromising between the native nomenclature and the adoption of the naming practice of the politically leading culture. On the other hand, the Gaulish family or community perhaps decidedly adopted a Roman name, either in vogue at the time, or referring to an influential Roman personality, with-

out an awareness of native onomastic traditions. Decisions may have differed in each micro-context, such as family/clan, settlement, tribe.

2.2 Although we rarely know the motivation of people, sometimes we are fortunately very close to an answer to this question. Occasionally we have direct evidence at our disposal, texts that tell us something about their authors' thoughts and motifs. A good example for this is, again, Ausonius, who states in his poems about the Bordelaise professors (*Prof.* 4.11f) that *Attius Patēra*'s name, obviously similar to Latin *patēra* 'a broad flat dish used for offerings', is a rendering of a Gaulish word for 'priest of the mysteries' (*mystes*).

There is another hint at an awareness of Gaulish name traditions which has recently been pointed out by Paul Dräger (2002: 150f; 277f) in a brief note on a name in Ausonius's *Mosella* (vv. 1–22). The description of a journey on the Roman road from Bingen to Neumagen follows a literary model from Virgil (*Aeneis* 6. 295–416). Aeneas crossed the underworld rivers, he passed by the helpless unburied dead, walked through the dark, wooded realms of grief (Tartarus), before he finally reached the Elysium. Similarly, Ausonius crosses the misty river Nahe, passes (in memory) by the unburied corpses of the Batavian rebels of AD 71. Then the author imagines himself wandering through the dark Hunsrück forest, and finally reached the sunny Mosel valley (equated with the Elysium). Ausonius mentions four road stations: *Vincum* (Bingen), *Dumnissus* (Denzen, in 995: Domnissa), *Tabernae* (location uncertain), and *No(v)iomagus* (Neumagen). Maps like the *Tabula Peutingeriana* show four places as well, but they have *Belginum*, an important settlement at that time, instead of *Tabernae*. The deviation from the road maps can possibly be seen in the context of the literary model. As a Gaul, Ausonius was certainly aware of Gaulish place name elements. His acquaintance with Gaulish is undisputed. Instead of *Bingium*, a name of Germanic origin (Neumann 1997), as on the *Tabula*, Ausonius uses the form *Vincum*. This is not only similar to Latin *vincere* 'defeat', but also to Gaulish *-vic-* 'fight, defeat' (*DLG* 318; Proto-Celtic **yik-e/o-* *KPV* 683–688 'to fight'). So in both languages, the name could be associated with the historical event. The second toponym alludes to, and in fact contains, the Gaulish word *dumno-*, *dubno-* 'deep, below; underworld' (*DLG* 151f). Thus, *Dumnissus* fits perfectly into the description of a trip to the netherworld. The attribute *arens* 'dry, arid' (v. 7, in accusative) is typical of a description of the dull, murky, barren netherworld. The aridity of the 'underworld' is turned into its opposite in the third name, *Tabernae* 'booths, shops, inns'. And this is just the entrance to the Mosel valley, the 'Elysian' 'New Field', which is the literal translation of

Novio-magus, the goal of the poet's journey. So there are several indications of Ausonius's deliberate use of names of Gaulish origin, anthroponyms as well as toponyms.

3. But usually, we do not have direct evidence of the naming practices. In some cases we can call on two ancillary disciplines, prosopography and name geography. Prosopography, on the one hand, sheds some light on onomastic traditions and name change in kinship groups. Geography, on the other hand, shows regional and local concentrations of names and name elements. Unfortunately, facts from prosopography are not always available, and the dissemination of names is sometimes too scanty or too insignificant. The *Cato* problem mentioned above is such a case, and there are hundreds of similar examples.

For that reason, I am about to develop an additional method, which is linguistic in principle, but supported by statistics. It can only be applied to anthroponymic systems as a whole or to typological sub-groups. But it has the advantage that it does not need any further information about the people who are called by particular names or who confer them to others.

3.1 The consideration is as follows. Each language has a phonemic system which is characteristic of itself. A phoneme is a basic sound which serves as a minimal feature to distinguish between words, e.g. the English minimal pair *gap* and *cap* differ only in the phonemes /g/ and /k/. The kind and number of phonemes vary from language to language, but many simple sounds occur almost everywhere. So e.g., Latin and other Italic dialects possess an initial *f-* before vowels, whereas Gaulish does not have this feature. (Italic *f-* is from Indo-European **bh-*, *dh-*, Gaulish *f-* from **p* in *(*s*)*pr/l-*, if at all). And vice versa, Gaulish has a velar fricative [x] (as in German *machen*, variant of /k/ before /s, t/), which does not occur in Latin. Its use among Latin speaking Gauls was actually a reason for mockery. Since the language of the Empire had a higher status than the native one, it is imaginable that a strange sound for Roman ears was usually avoided in the official usage of names, but maybe maintained in a private context or in local economic activities. Among the potters of La Graufesenque, we see e.g. the retention of names with a *tau gallicum* (probably an affricate similar to German *z* [tʰ]) in *Meddili(i)us*, *Medsilus*, *Meθilus*, Μεθιλος, *Medilus* (DLG 223). Forms in different contexts like *Messilus* and *Messorius*, *Messirius*, and others with a consistent writing with *-ss-* probably indicate a more advanced stage of romanisation and assimilation to Latin phonetics. Moreover, the written basis *messi-* could be associated with Latin *messis* 'harvest'.

It is not only the phonemes that vary, but also their combination. A well-attested sequence of sounds in one language may hardly occur in another one. Nevertheless, names possibly preserve older forms and even phonetic peculiarities. Some combinations of phonemes do not occur at all, such as initial *tl-* in Latin, whereas they do exist in Greek (if rarely, esp. $\tau\lambda\tilde{\eta}\nu\alpha\iota$ ‘to suffer’) and Insular Celtic (e.g. Irish *tláith* ‘weak, tender’, Welsh *tlws* ‘pretty’). And, although simple combinations like *CVC* are extremely frequent, the scheme usually does not exist with any arbitrary phoneme. In English, there are words like /kæp/ *cap*, /kip/ *kip*, /kɒp/ *cop*, and either [kʌp] or [kup] (dialectal) *cup*, but not both in the same register. Moreover, words with *pVm* do not exist except *pam* in card game (German ‘Kreuzbube’) and as a nickname. So, not all types of phoneme combinations which are ‘allowed’ in a language are actually attested.

3.2 The attested syllable types in the lexicon of one language or onomastic system may only be present to a certain degree in another one. Say e.g., the phoneme combinations in the vocabulary of language X are present to a certain degree in language Y, and vice versa, the types of phoneme combination in language Y are present to a certain degree in language X. Actually, we are interested in the phoneme combinations of personal names, so we use the figures for the (genuine) onomastic system of language X, $O(x)$, and the figures of language Y and the (genuine) onomastic system $O(y)$, respectively. We might say e.g. that $O(x)$ has 75% of all the phoneme combinations present in Y and 70% of all the phoneme combinations in $O(y)$.

If we have a situation of intercultural contact, with either mutual or unilateral influence (e.g. resulting from conquest and subsequent incorporation into a larger community), then we may see a change in the course of time of the onomastic system of the influenced culture. Or we may observe an increasing difference between contemporary sub-systems in this culture, e.g. between names in official usage (administrative, juridic, large-scale economics) opposed to private or local ones, or names of high status (e.g. romanised) people opposed to those of low status or provincials. This change is supposedly characterised by an approximation towards the phonemic, morphologic, and lexic systems of the influencing culture. The degree of change can be taken as a measure of the strength of the influence. So the difference, in attested phonemes or allowed phoneme combinations, between a native onomastic system $O(x)$ of a culture using natural language X and the altered onomastic system $O(x/y)$ of X, influenced by language Y, is a criterion for onomastic acculturation.

The following diagram shows a culture with language X (in blue) and a superimposed culture with language Y (in red). Their respective (native) onomastic systems $O(x)$ and $O(y)$ are marked by small squares with broken lines. Acculturation results in a shift of $O(x)$ towards the influencing language Y, which is represented as $O(x/y)$ (in violet). It is probable that the acculturated system $O(x/y)$ strives for the use of phonemes and ‘allowed’ combinations of the influencing language. $O(x/y)$ may also be closer to its onomastic system $O(y)$, but it possibly retains combinations which are not attested in $O(y)$. The diagram is meant to render the situation in Roman Gaul, and it may be different for other areas.

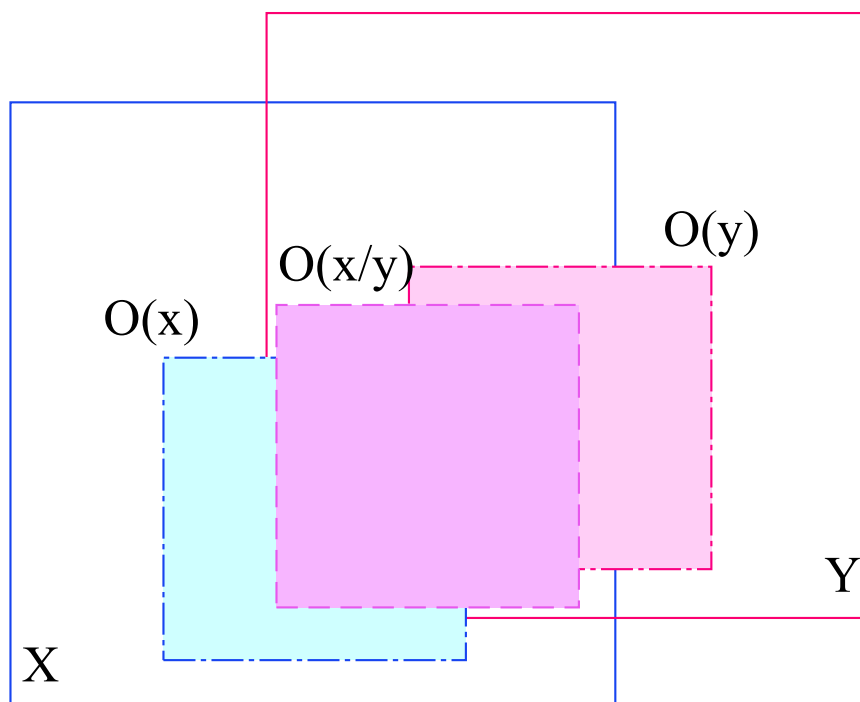


Diagram: Intercultural contact of onomastic systems $O(x)$ and $O(y)$ of two languages X and Y, resulting in $O(x/y)$

The same scheme of development can also be applied for the onomastic lexicon, and it will probably be even more apparent in this field because the number of lexemes surpasses that of phoneme combinations. It will be more difficult, however, to establish a degree of coincidence or difference because the total number of onomastic lexemes is hard to specify.

Some examples will show the point more clearly. On the one hand, we find in the Latin onomastic tradition names like *Rufus*, which is phonetically impossible in Gaulish, or like *Iulius*, which seems to be semantically void in Gaulish. And on

the other hand, we come across Gaulish names like *Teddillus* ‘hotspur’ (diminutive form), which is phonetically impossible in Latin, and *Samognatos* ‘summer born’, with a first compound *samo-*, which is semantically void in Latin; *samera*, *samara* ‘seed of the elm’ in Pliny and Columella is not used as a name element. The assessment of the meaning of a Gaulish word may sound spurious because this language is only attested in fragments. So we cannot be sure about the existence and meaning of Gaulish lexemes. But in spite of that, we have a rather good idea of the onomastic lexicon. There are thousands of names collected in Holder, *Altceltischer Sprachschatz*, and Whatmough, *Dialects of ancient Gaul*, and several hundreds in the *Recueil des inscriptions gauloises* and more recent publications (e.g. Luján 2003).

3.3 The main point of this analysis is to establish and to compare the difference between the onomastic systems of the Romans, the Gauls, and the population of the Gallic provinces. What distinctions can be observed, and how can they be explained? How far-reaching is the impact of the superimposed system? Very little can be said at the moment. Among the 48 personal names in the *gens Ausoniana*, there are 16 (c. 33.3%) which cannot be taken as alluding to Gaulish names, but only 8 (c. 16.7%) of them can neither be explained as translations nor as assonances. But as long as this cypher is on its own, it cannot tell us very much. I would dare to guess, however, that the rate of difference would be much higher than 17% in completely different onomastic systems.

4. From the foregoing consideration, it emerges that, on the one hand, the study of intercultural names (*Interferenznamen*) gives us valuable information about the Gaulish language and name system, and sometimes even beyond the situation in Gaul. So intercultural onomastics contributes to Celtic studies in general. On the other hand, Celtic Gaul is a typical example of a culture which was heavily influenced and eventually almost replaced by a foreign culture. So this instance contributes to the study of intercultural contacts on many levels. Among these, questions of the changing cultural identity and self-awareness are also addressed. It will be one of the main tasks of the research in the future, to develop or to adopt suitable models and analytical methods for the description of intercultural onomastics. But to proceed so far is not on the agenda for today.

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