




Jasminka Kuzmanovska (Skopje)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5769-3607>

## TRACES OF PRE-GREEK LINGUISTICS SUBSTRATUM IN EARLY BYZANTINE TOPONYMY: LISTS RELATED TO MACEDONIA AND THESSALY IN PROCOPIUS' *BUILDINGS*

**Abstract.** In our contribution, we will focus on the traces of the old Pre-Greek linguistics substratum in certain names of forts from Justinian's building program presented in the Procopius' *Buildings* (Περὶ κτισμάτων, *De aedificiis*). Actually, the Book IV of the panegyric features a description of fortifications, built and restored by the Emperor Justinian in the European territories. This is the most detailed book in the work, written with great care and completeness, most likely due to the fact that the danger of barbarian incursions in these areas was the greatest. In the paper we will present certain examples of place names which obviously contain remnants of relict languages as very important and valuable toponomastic evidence, typical for the broader area. We are going to inspect the etymology of the place names by Procopius attested as Λάρισσα, Γόμφοι, Λόσσοнос, Πέλεκον, Χάραδρος and Βάβαç. If possible, we will comparatively examine testimonies from other ancient and medieval sources, as well as epigraphic and archeological data for each name.

**Keywords:** Procopius, *De aedificiis*, *Buildings*, fortress, Macedonia, Thessaly, place names, Pre-Greek substrate, etymology

Inspired by the 24<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Byzantine studies in Venice and Padua themed *Byzantium – Bridge between Worlds*, we decided to refer to certain linguistic features we have noticed in toponyms recorded in Procopius' *Buildings*. These place names were attested in the transitional period of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, in a very unspecific work, written by the author who also is rather controversial. This significant time is a turning point in terms of historical relations between the so-called East and West, as well as the old and the inevitably approaching new, which in turn affects the language in a broader sense and on many levels. The source we will present in our contribution through the lens of toponymy, Procopius' *Buildings*, is also a reflection of this transitional era, and it is ambiguous as well, because in the 6<sup>th</sup> century panegyrics were not a common form of Byzantine

literature<sup>1</sup>. Regardless of motivation which led to the creation of this work, its style, and its structure, it is still unanimously accepted as a first-class source for geography, topography, and art from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the segment of place names enumerated in the Book IV, in the so-called κατάλογος. Of course, rhetorical descriptions and commonplaces are apparent in certain parts of Procopius' panegyric. Still, there is no doubt that the author had access to official documents from the state archives, reports of provincial administrators, authentic official registers, and maps or lists of still unrealized state projects<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, we fully agree with those researchers who claim that the catalogue from the Book IV, represents the only valuable and authentic testimony about the buildings, toponymy, and language of the Balkan Peninsula in the period<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, we must also take into account the challenging philology of the text (mostly embodied by many hapaxes – names of fortresses uniquely attested there) and the fact that some of the names are unclear and written in wrong or distorted spelling. In terms of language, it is an undeniable fact that in the time of Justinian things were reverted to what had been common practice in the administration of the Early Empire: Latin language to be used in the West and Greek in the East. As a result of Justinian's conquest, Latin language, in regard to territories and population, in certain way has been reintroduced to the Empire, which once again became truly bilingual. This bilingualism is largely confirmed by epigraphy, on the inscriptions, especially in the areas we are writing about in this paper<sup>4</sup>. Also, this bilingualism, reflecting Justinian's transitional era, is rather vivid in the text of *Buildings* on many occasions, and it is most noticeable on the presentation of long lists of fortresses. Actually, it is obvious that the Greek from the lists in which the names of the forts were composed, is a transcription from the Latin original, which was phonetically modified itself and also acquired some regional peculiarities in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, many place names in Macedonia and Thessaly show even deeper intertwining of languages, especially in the segment

<sup>1</sup> PROCOPIUS, *Buildings, History of the Wars, and Secret History*, ed. H.B. DEWING, G. DOWNEY, Cambridge Massachusetts 1914–1940 [= LCL, 343] (cetera: PROCOPIUS). We also consulted the edition: *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, vol. IV, *De aedificiis*, vol. II, ed. J. HAURY, corr. G. WIRTH, Leipzig 1963–1964 [= BSGR].

<sup>2</sup> P. SKOK, *De l'importance des listes toponomastiques de Procope pour la connaissance de la latinite balkanique*, RIEB 1(5), 1937, p. 47–58; G. DOWNEY, *The Composition of Procopius, De Aedificiis*, TPAPA 78, 1947, p. 173–174.

<sup>3</sup> A. CAMERON, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, Berkeley 1985 [= TCH, 10], p. 222; V. BEŠEVILIEV, *Zur Deutung der Kastellnamen in Prokops werk "De aedificiis"*, Amsterdam 1970, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> On the subject of bilingualism in the period of Late antiquity very valuable remarks are presented in: V. NEDELJKOVIĆ, *Justinian's πάτριος φωνή*, Balc 47, 2016, p. 55–73; IDEM, *Castles made of sand? Balkan Latin from Petar Skok to J.N. Adams*, [in:] *The Danubian Lands between the Black, Aegean and Adriatic Seas (7<sup>th</sup> Century BC – 10<sup>th</sup> Century AD). Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Black Sea Antiquities (Belgrade 17–21 September 2013)*, ed. G.R. TSETSKHLADZE, A. AVRAM, J. HARGRAVE, Belgrade 2015, p. 323–328.

morphology, but also in certain linguistic features of semantics. Our closer examination of the Macedonian list has shown, for example, that there is a group of fortresses like: Σίκλαι, Φασκίαι, Κουμαρκίανα, and so on, which clearly confirm the influence that Latin (especially Vulgar Latin) exerted on the Greek vocabulary, both medieval and contemporary. It is true that this process started at a later date and was far less pervasive than the reverse influence of Greek upon Latin in the previous period, but it is still evident, especially in provinces where the Greek language has been dominant. The most important fact about this group of toponyms is that the words at their roots, through the later developed Byzantine form, had an adverse effect on Latin-derived Romance languages. Moreover, they were a crucial linguistic mediator for the entry of Romanisms in the Slavic languages of the Balkans. On this very important and complex linguistic process, we have spoken and written in other places and texts. In this paper we just wanted to briefly outline them as a linguistic expression of the unbreakable ties between East and West by the end of antiquity and the beginning of the Byzantine era and later<sup>5</sup>. Based on linguistic material from the sources, we can rationally conclude that these changes to the language are primarily a reflection of many other processes in society and, above all, of the ambiguity of identity and fluidity of political alliances in late antiquity.

From the exceedingly rich and complex toponymic testimony of Procopius' *Buildings*, we will focus on certain examples of place names from the Macedonian list, and of Thessaly as well, which clearly reflect traces of old Pre-Greek linguistic layers in early Byzantine toponymy. Technically speaking, Procopius presents Justinian's building activity in Thessaly in two places. Firstly, at the beginning of the Book IV, where the author describes the restoration undertaken in very old and famous cities. Although he initially announced that the remaining numerous forts restored in Thessaly will be included in the same list which concerns the territory of Macedonia, he enumerated only seven on the separate list, immediately after the Macedonian one<sup>6</sup>. So, we practically, have two lists in the text: one named Ἐπὶ Μακεδονίας and the other one named Ἀνανεώθη καὶ ἐπὶ Θεσσαλίας φρούρια τάδε<sup>7</sup>.

In the paper, we will point out only the most illustrative examples which clearly represent old substrate layers in Procopius' toponymy, which are still visible and perceptible in the period of Late antiquity and later on. As a matter of fact, the most ancient toponyms from Thessaly, which clearly reflect old, Pre-Greek linguistic

<sup>5</sup> J. КУЗМАНОВСКА, *Φασκίαι – топоним латинског порекла у македонском списку код Прокопија (о неким лексичким рефлексима у романским и словенским језицима)*, [in:] *Exegi topimentum aere pereptius* (Зборник во чест на Елена Колева, Љубинка Басотова и Даница Чадиковска, по повод 85 години од нивното раѓање), Sys посебно издание 5, 2019, p. 92–106, [https://www.systasis.org/pdfs/posebni/zbornik5\\_cel.pdf](https://www.systasis.org/pdfs/posebni/zbornik5_cel.pdf) [31 V 2023].

<sup>6</sup> PROCOPIUS, IV, 3, 15, p. 244

<sup>7</sup> PROCOPIUS, IV, 4, 3, p. 255.

layer are mentioned in textual part, at the beginning of the Book IV as Λάρισσα (*Larissa*), Τρίκα (*Trika*), Φάρσαλος (*Pharsalos*), Γόμφοι (*Gomphoi*) and so on. Researching Procopius' place names, we realized that toponyms (in this particular source it is primarily fortifications), were evidently named according to physical/geographical characteristics of the terrain and they certainly belong to the group of so-called *oldest names*, which have also been classified as *natural names*<sup>8</sup>. Namely, this principle of establishing the names of the settlements, according to the nature of the landscape or closely connected to life and occupation of the people of a certain area, is the oldest and quite naturally reflects the oldest types of naming<sup>9</sup>. This is the main reason why their name has remained unchanged to this day.

The most typical example among place names from Thessaly is the city of Λάρισσα (*Larissa*)<sup>10</sup>. In Procopius' *Buildings* we find information related to the restoration of the city walls that were badly damaged *in recent times* (whereby Procopius most likely refers to the invasions of the Ostrogoths at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century). The spelling in which the name is recorded in ancient sources is Λάρισ(σ)α, with variation of a simple and doubled sibilant, in feminine singular. It is obvious that this toponym cannot be reliably explained by means of the Greek language. According to R. Katičić, names with this suffix -σσ, are more common than those with the suffix -vθ<sup>11</sup>. It is also very indicative that many other places in Thessaly, Argolis, Attica, on the islands of Crete and Lesbos, but also in Syria and Lydia were bearing the same name, as Stephen of Byzantium testifies under the plural entry: Λάρισσα πόλεις ι' in his lexicon<sup>12</sup>. This testimony probably supports the thesis set forth by P. Kretschmer and later developed by other researchers of the Pre-Greek substratum<sup>13</sup>. According to him, Pre-Greek language, geographically present in the Aegean and southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, represented by toponyms with the above-mentioned suffixes, is very closely related to the languages in Asia Minor (Phrygian, Lydian) and older linguistic layers of Italy<sup>14</sup>. Bulgarian linguist V. Georgiev believes that the name Larissa comes from the Indo-European base *\*lawarwentyā* 'stone', which imply that the word is, according to

<sup>8</sup> About so called *Naturnamen* in: *Namenforschung. Name Studies. Les noms propres. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Onomastik. International Handbook of Onomastics. Manuel international d'onomastique*, vol. I–III, ed. E. EICHLER, G. HILTY, H. LÖFFNER, H. STEGER, L. ZGUSTA, Berlin–New York 1995–1996, p. 702.

<sup>9</sup> П.Хр. Илиевски, *Балканолошки лингвистички студии со посебен осврт на историскиот развој на македонскиот јазик*, Скопје 1988, p. 476.

<sup>10</sup> PROCOPIUS, IV, 3, 9, p. 243.

<sup>11</sup> R. KATIČIĆ, *Ancient Languages of the Balkans*, Michigan 1976, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> STEPHAN VON BYZANCE, *Ethnika Stephani Byzantii Ethnicorum quae supersunt*, rec. A. MEINEKII, Graz 1958 (cetera: STEPHANUS), p. 412.

<sup>13</sup> For a longer period Pre-Greek language material has been interpreted in various ways. Despite the fact that from the variety of research theories, only the Anatolian, Pelasgian and Mediterranean theory survived, we believe that each individual interpretation of the Pre-Greek substrate in its own way improved our knowledge on the subject.

<sup>14</sup> P. KRETSCHMER, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, Göttingen 1896, p. 401.

his famous Pelasgian theory of old, Pelasgian origin<sup>15</sup>. Milan Budimir, who, referring to Strabo's testimony that *all cities bearing this name in the Balkan-Anatolian region are located in the plains*, suggests a connection of the name with Hesychius' glossa λωρυμνόν 'deepest, lowest', while pointing to the well-known Indo-European vocal alternation  $\bar{a}/\bar{o}$ <sup>16</sup>. The geographical location of Thessalian Larissa fully corresponds to this interpretation, and, more importantly, equalization Λάρυμνα ἢ Λάρισσα in the appendix of *Urbium regionum fluminum et. nomina immutata* confirmed prof. Budimir's point of view<sup>17</sup>. Worth mentioning is another, more recent etymology, which seems to be the most likely, according to which: Λάρισσα < \*Λάρικ-ια, from the name for the 'yew tree' λάριξ, λάρικος, ἦ, which, also, confirms Paleo-Balkan origin of the name<sup>18</sup>. Non-Greek origin of the word is, also, as we have seen, implicitly confirmed by Stephen of Byzantium and actually, the very fact that not only Larissa, but all other above mentioned toponyms, are mainly interpreted by the glosses of Hesychius confirms that in their root are foreign, rare, and otherwise obscure terms that require additional explanation. Besides, the name is attested in Homer's *Iliad*, where the city is mentioned in the following passage: *Hippothous led the tribes of the Pelasgi that dwelt in deep-soiled Larisa*<sup>19</sup>. Also, illustrative fact for the thesis of pre-Greek origin is that the spelling of the city name in sources varies between a simple and a doubled sibilant, which is specific to old, pre-Greek stems.

Among other cities in the Book IV, Procopius also named Γόμφοι (*Gomphoi*), a town in Thessalian Histiaeotis<sup>20</sup>. The toponym is attested in ancient sources. In the work of Claudius Ptolemy the city is recorded under the name Γόμφοι as the second listed city in the district of Hestiaeotis<sup>21</sup>. As a fortified place (*castellum/oppidum*), it is also mentioned in other Latin sources, but historian Livy describes in more detail the strategic position of both, the place itself, and the surroundings<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> В. ГЕОРГИЕВ, *Найстарите славянски имена на Балканския полуостров и тяхното значение за нашия език и нашата история*, БЕ 8.4–5, 1958, p. 323.

<sup>16</sup> М. BUDIMIR, *Pelasto-Slavica. Poseban otisak iz 309 knjige Rada Jugoslovenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, Zagreb 1956, p. 81–194; *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*, ed. H.M. SCHMIDT, Bonn 1867 (cetera: HESYCHIUS), p. 1001: λωρυμνόν· βαθύτατα, καθώτατα.

<sup>17</sup> *Hieroclis Synecdemus et Notitiae Graecae episcopatum, accedunt Nili Doxapatrui Notitia patriarchatum et Locorum nomina immutata*, rec. G. PARTHEU, Amsterdam 1967: Appendix. 1, 54: Λάρυμνα ἢ Λάρισσα, in commentary Λάρισσα sic Rh. Λάρυσα reliqui. In fact, this data mistakenly refers to a completely different city in Boeotia, as Hesychius confirms: Λάρυμνα, πόλις Βοιωτίας, but this association is important from phonetic and semantic point of view.

<sup>18</sup> В.Ю. ОТКУПЩИКОВ, *Догреческий субстрат. истоков европейской цивилизации*, Ленинград 1988, p. 157.

<sup>19</sup> HOMER, *Iliad*, vol. I, *Books 1–12*, II, 840, trans. A.T. MURRAY, rev. W.F. WYATT, Cambridge Massachusetts 1924 [= LCL, 170] (cetera: HOMER), p. 112.

<sup>20</sup> PROCOPIUS, IV, 3, 5, p. 243.

<sup>21</sup> *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, III, 12, 41, vol. I, ed. C. MÜLLERUS, Parisiis 1883: Γόμφοι μζ γο λθ γ.

<sup>22</sup> *Titii livi ab urbe condita. Tomus v libri XXXI–XXV, XXXII, 14, 2*, rec. A.H. McDONALD, [s.l.] 1965 [= SCBO]: *Ceterum Amynander, quia suo militia parum fidebat, petito a consule modico praesidio cum*

As for this very old toponym, mentioned even by Homer, both the archaeologist O. Karageorgu and researcher K. Miller were probably guided by a visual impression and unique configuration of the terrain when interpreting the name, starting from the technical meaning of the word γόμφοϲ, -ου, ὁ ‘stake, wedge’. Namely, O. Karageorgu believes that the name of this city is related to the unique configuration of the terrain, more precisely to its specific location on the hill now called Episcopi<sup>23</sup>. This hill is, actually, one of three that extend from the Pindus mountain range and enter the Thessalian plane in the form of a peg or wedge. K. Miller expresses the opinion that the fortified city of Gomphi was located on a peg-shaped rock<sup>24</sup>. P. Chantraine in his etymological dictionary mentions the term ‘wedge’ as the first meaning of the word, especially *a wedge used in shipbuilding*, a usage confirmed by ancient sources<sup>25</sup>. In addition, the wooden wedge served as a connecting device in general, especially for connecting the front and rear parts of the traction wheels, which clearly indicates that it is a very old technical term. According to P. Chantraine, the word is common in the Ionian and Attic dialects. In the Latin language the inherited form is *gomphus*, meaning ‘large joint in the shape of a wedge, a rock in the shape of a wedge’. Grammarian Hesychius confirms those meanings: γόμφοι ‘wedges, joints, connections, teeth-molars’<sup>26</sup>. Due to the fact that the word is polysemous, which means that denotes several terms, it is difficult to make a judgment concerning the basis from which it originates. Among different meanings offered, we believe that the meaning of *the wedge* would be the most suitable and the name of the fort is actually a description of the configuration of the terrain where it is located, as Karageorgu believes. In this sense, we can compare it with the Serbian geographical term *клик*, which as a toponymic metaphor can be connected with the term *кљыкъ* ‘очѣак’ (canine tooth), denoting *a bare rocky peak, a rock that rises above the surrounding land, a cliff*<sup>27</sup> and the etymology according to which Gr. γόμφοϲ reflects the PIE word for ‘tooth’, probably ‘cutting tooth’ *gemb<sup>h</sup>* – ‘bite’ *gomb<sup>h</sup>o* – ‘cutting tooth’ reflected in that meaning in Skt. *jámbha*, Alb. *dhëmb*, OCS \*zobъ’, Latv. *Zùobs*, ToA *kam*, ToB *keme*<sup>28</sup>.

From the separate list of fortresses rebuilt in Thessaly, we want to point out the name attested by Procopius as Λόσσονοϲ, which is also mentioned by other

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*Gomphos peteret, oppidum protinus nomine Phaecam, situm inter Gomphos faucesque angustas quae ab Athamania Thessaliam dirimunt, ui cepit. Inde Gomphos adortus, et per aliquot dies summa ui tuentes urbem, cum iam scalas ad moenia erexisset, eo demum metu perpulit ad deditionem.*

<sup>23</sup> O. KARAGIORGOU, *Urbanism and Economy in Late Antique Thessalia (3<sup>rd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)*. *The Archaeological Evidence. A Thesis in Three Volumes*, vol. I, Trinity 2001, p. 142.

<sup>24</sup> K. MÜLLER, *Geschichten hellenischer Stämme und Städte*, vol. III, Breslau 1824, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des Mots*, vol. I–II, Paris 1968, p. 232. Cf. *Herodoti Historiae*, II, 96, rec. C. HUDE, <sup>3</sup>Oxonii 1927 [= SCBO], p. 186.

<sup>26</sup> HESYCHIUS, 805, 1, p. 356: \*γόμφοι· μύλοι· σφῆνες· δεσμά· ἄρθρα· σύνδεσμοι· καὶ ὀδόντες γόμφοι.

<sup>27</sup> А. ЛОМА, *Киљан ‘пободен камен’-далматоромански остатак на тлу Црне Горе?*, ЈФ 65, 2009, p. 89–99.

<sup>28</sup> R.S.P. BEEKES, L. VAN BECK, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Brill–Leiden 2010, p. 282.

ancient sources with different spelling: Ὀλοοσσόν, Ὀλοοσσών, Ὀλοσσών<sup>29</sup>. It is not recorded as a city (πόλις) in archaic and classical sources, but it is reasonable to assume that it already had this status back then, because there is a testimony that it minted coins in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>30</sup>. Homer adds to the place name the epithet *white*, as Strabo explains later, *because of the light color of the clay that covers the ground on which it is located*. According to W. Leake, the city was divided by a rapid stream running through the middle of it. Actually, he noticed that two ravines, as well as several smaller torrents, have a white sediment composition, which aligns with the explanation why the city has received the epithet *white* since ancient times<sup>31</sup>. The geographer Strabo describes it as a city in Parabeia<sup>32</sup>, while the Byzantine author Stephen of Byzantium records it as a city in Magnesia, probably confusing it with the Magnesian city Olizon (Ὀλιζών), which he places in Thessaly in another entry in his geographical lexicon *Ethnika*<sup>33</sup>. Older sources confirmed the strategic position of the settlement, located near the crossroads of Western and Eastern Macedonia via passes Volustana and Petra towards the Thessalian plain. Procopius recorded modified spelling Λόσσονος in the Late Antiquity period, which is likely a distorted or corrupted version of the older one. Procopius testimony, the writings of Strabo and Lycophron, as well as the discovery of milestone from the pre-Christian period, confirm the existence of the settlement before the Byzantine era. The new name of the city Ἐλασσών was first recorded by Eustathius of Thessalonica and according to his opinion *it represents the form which was used instead of the barbarian variant Ὀλοσσών*<sup>34</sup>. In the work of Byzantine historian John Kantakouzenos it is registered as φρούριον, which along with three other fortifications, briefly fell under the dominion of John of Epirus<sup>35</sup>. In the *Notitia* 18, from the period of Andronicus the Third, it was recorded as an archbishopric and the same was confirmed in the *Notitia* 21<sup>36</sup>. The fortress described by Procopius is located on a hill northwest of today's town of Elassona, which is, actually, on the road from Larissa towards Macedonia. Above the old rampart of ancient Olosson, one can partially recognize the wall, built in the time of Justinian, with the aim of

<sup>29</sup> HOMER, II, 739, p. 104; *Lycophronis Alexandra*, ed. L. MASCIALINO, Leipzig 1964 [= BSGR], p. 906.

<sup>30</sup> E. BABELON, *Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines*, II, IV, vol. I–IV, ed. E. LEROUX, Paris 1901–1932, p. 327–328.

<sup>31</sup> W.M. LEAKE, *Travels in Northern Greece*, vol. III, London 1835, p. 345.

<sup>32</sup> STRABO, *Geography*, vol. IV, *Books 8–9*, trans. H.L. JONES, Cambridge Massachusetts 1927 [= LCL, 196], p. 424.

<sup>33</sup> STEPHANUS, p. 490, 11; p. 489, 15.

<sup>34</sup> *Eustathii commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem, ad fidem exempli Romani editi*, vol. I–II, Lipsiae 1827, p. 270. Cf. J. KODER, F. HILD, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. I, *Hellas und Thessalia*, Vienna 1972, p. 153.

<sup>35</sup> *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri IV. Graecae et Latine*, II, 28, vol. I–III, rec. L. SCHOPENI, Bonnae 1831 [= CSHB], p. 474.

<sup>36</sup> *Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed., praef. J. DARROUZÈS, Paris 1981 [= GEEB], 18, 158: κς ἡ Ἐλασσών; 21, 82. ἐ ἡ Ἐλασσών.

strengthening the defensive capability of the old fort<sup>37</sup>. According to the opinion of M. Perrin-Henry, who deals with toponymy in the Book IV, the name of Procopius' fort is in the genitive case<sup>38</sup>. The spelling Ὀλοσσοнос in the work of Herodian grammarian confirms her opinion<sup>39</sup>. It is obvious that this is a distorted form, since the initial vowel, which is an integral part of the name in older spelling Ὀλοσσών, as well as in the newer Ἐλασσών, is missing. The doubled sibilant also survived in Procopius' version. The testimony of Eusthatus of Thessalonica indicating that the new name is a replacement for the barbaric variation of the name, which was in use before, confirms that it is, actually, the non-Greek name in origin. Also, the fact that it was merely mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, together with other very old toponyms, as well as the location in Perabeia, leaves open the possibility that it is an old, Pre-Greek stem. The double sibilant as part of the name, as well as the ending -ων, point to the possible influence of Phrygian. A change of an initial vowel is perhaps the result of dialect variability.

Just to conclude, the original name Ὀλοσσών, which might be of both Greek, or as we have seen, more likely of non-Greek origin and has nothing to do with the adverb ἐλαχὺς 'smaller, more insignificant, weaker'. The new form Ἐλασσών is obviously modified by paronymy according to the comparative ἐλάσσων. In Procopius' *Buildings* a form in which the initial vowel is omitted is recorded. Since all other sources have recorded spellings with the variant o/e, we can assume, either that it is an orthographic error, or, which is more likely, that Procopius' form presupposes the decomposition of an article: Ὀλοσσών understood as ὁ Λοσσών.

In the Macedonian list, there is another hapax and a rather obvious substrate name Πέλεκον. Since it is not mentioned in other ancient sources, at least not under this name, it is very difficult to determine its location. According to A. Konstantakopoulou and A. Keramopoulos, primarily on the basis of archeological findings, believed that the fortress Πέλεκον can be identified with the town Petra (Πέτραι), modern Πέτρης, which is located on the left bank of the homonymous lake Λίμνη Πέτρον in Northern Greece<sup>40</sup>. According to Keramopoulos, in this place, which had a strategic position since the Roman road *Via Egnatia* passed in the immediate vicinity, the remains of defensive ramparts were found, the upper layer of which, by all accounts, is most likely from the Justinian period<sup>41</sup>. In addition to this opinion,

<sup>37</sup> M. SOTIRIOU, *The Early Paleologian Revival in the Countries and Islands of Greece during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century* (pl. 48–64), BChAS 22, 1966, p. 257–276.

<sup>38</sup> PROCOPE DE CÉSARÉE, *Les Édifices Livre IV. Traduction et commentaires*, ed. M. PERRIN-HENRY, Paris 1974, p. 188, f. 376.

<sup>39</sup> (*Aelius*) *Herodianus et Pseudo-Herodianus, Partitiones*, 229, 4, ed. J.F. BOISSONADE, London 1819.

<sup>40</sup> A. ΚΟΝΣΤΑΝΤΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ιστορική Γεωγραφία τής Μακεδονίας (4<sup>ος</sup>–6<sup>ος</sup> αι.)*, Ιωάννινα 1984, p. 256.

<sup>41</sup> Α.Δ. ΚΕΡΑΜΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Γ' Ἐρευναι ἐν Δυτικῇ Μακεδονίας*, ΠΑΕ 93, 1938, p. 54–60; *Tabula Imperii Romani (TIR) K 34 Naissus, Dyrrhachion-Scupi-Serdica*, ed. J. ŠAŠELJ, Ljubljana 1976, p. 100; cf. V. KRAVARI, *Villes et villages de Macedoine occidentale*, Paris 1989 [= RBZ], p. 314–315.



there is another possible identification. Namely, there is an assumption that it might be a mountain village Πελεκάνος (Pelekanos), whose older name is Πέλκα (Pelka), located at an altitude of 760 m in today's prefecture of Kozani, 47 km northwest of its capital bearing the same name<sup>42</sup>. V. Kolokotronis, who admittedly did not analyze the name closely, believes that the place with newer name, Pelka, which according to his opinion is found near ancient Kastoria, is actually a corrupted form of the name mentioned by Procopius in Macedonian list. In addition, the author notes that this fact only proves that the attempt to find the Slavic origin of the place names, not only in this case, but also in other fortifications listed by Procopius, is completely unacceptable and we fully concur with Kolokotronis' position.

Regardless of the identification, our attention in this paper concerns the meaning and origin of the name Πέλεκον mentioned by Procopius. We believe that the origin of it should be sought in the appellative, Pre-Greek noun of eastern origin πέλεκκον, -ου, τὸ οἰ πέλεκκος, οὔ, ὄ meaning 'an ax handle', which is derived from the old basis πέλεκυς, εως, ὄ 'axe, hewing axe or axe for killing sacrificial animals, battle axe'. For the long time, the word was considered Indo-European<sup>43</sup>, however, it is more likely that the word originates from some non-Indo-European base<sup>44</sup>. The double consonant -κκ also suggests Pre-Greek gemination, as indicated by Furnée. Considering the compatibility of Gr. πέλεκυς to sanscr. *paraśú-* 'axe, battle axe', from Iranian into Tocharian: ToA *porat*, ToB *peret* < QPIE \**peleku*, the word is evidently Proto-Indo-European, and even in this language it can also be a loanword<sup>45</sup>.

Identification of the fortress, despite the high probability that is located near the town of Pelka, approximately 48 km from Kozani, is still unconfirmed. Assumed localization of the fort has strategic value, because it controlled the passes of Upper and Western Macedonia to Elimeia, Orestida and Eordaea. Since the archeological findings of Keramopoulos date back to the second century BC, we assume that the fortress from Justinian period, listed by Procopius as Πέλεκον was rebuilt in the period of great barbarian invasions. Correctness of the interpretation and etymology of the name is also confirmed by toponymic examples from the identical semantic base in Slavic language. Namely, several place names in Macedonia are semantically related to the appellative *секира* 'axe', as the examples of *Секирани* (Sekirani), village north of Bitola, *Секирник* (Sekirnik) east of Strumica, *Секирци* (Sekirci) northwest of Prilep in today's North Macedonia, prove. These names are semantic parallels of the same old Proto-Indo-European basis.

<sup>42</sup> V. KOLOKOTRŌNĒS, *La Macédoine et l'hellénisme. Étude historique et ethnologique*, Paris 1919, p. 512.

<sup>43</sup> H. FRISK, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1973, p. 497.

<sup>44</sup> P. CHANTRAINNE, *Dictionnaire étymologique...*, p. 875.

<sup>45</sup> R.S.P. BEEKES, L. VAN BECK, *Etymological Dictionary...*, p. 1167.

In the Procopius' Macedonian list, there are several fortresses that evidently got their name according to the physical feature of the terrain, most of them denoting a 'ravine, gorge, watercourse'. Besides obviously Greek name Αὐλών and probably, Pre-Greek Κάλαρνος as well as the name of the fort – Χάραδρος which represent old Pre-Greek layer in the late ancient toponymy. In the interest of keeping a reasonable scope of the article, we don't want to go further into details regarding the localization of this fortress, but only to stress necessary details concerning the linguistic origin of the name. Namely, according to H. Frisk, who followed the opinion of Boisacq and Schwyzer on this issue, the word χάραδρος is derivative from the Greek noun χαράδρα, ἡ 'dry bed of a mountain river, torrent, ravine' which, in his opinion, is etymologically related to χέραδος 'rock, gravel, sediment'<sup>46</sup>. He also assumes that the word does not have a convincing etymology. All etymological dictionaries, including the most recent of Beekes agree that it is necessary to abandon the older connection with the verb χαράσσω 'cut, engrave' assumed by Bequignon and Pokorny<sup>47</sup>. He believes that there is no convincing alternative etymology for the lexeme. Since variation -χεραδ/-χαραδ, as Beekes claims, cannot be explained in IE terms, we can conclude that the word is probably Pre-Greek, which is quite plausible for geographical terms. Another proof for correctness of this opinion is the existence of a Macedonian parallel of the name Γάλαδρα(ι) recorded by Stephen of Byzantium. Prominent Macedonian classical philologist M. Petruševski quite correctly related it to the Greek noun χάραδρα. Namely, the author showed that the name Γάλαδρα(ι) originates from Ancient Macedonian appellative γάλαδρα (older γάραδρα) which is identical with the Greek χάραδρα, with the well-known Macedonian consonantism and the loss of aspiration in original *mediae aspiratae* in Ancient Macedonian (the syllable γα- corresponds to the Greek χα-). In addition, -λα in the second syllable has been interpreted as a result of liquid dissimilation due to the following -δρα, as attested by the variants of the text in Lycophron<sup>48</sup>. At the same time, this example is also valuable evidence that Ancient Macedonian and Greek share a number of words that have no parallels in other IE languages.

Another very illustrative example from the Macedonian list is the name of the fortress Βάβας (in one redaction of the text attested as Βάβος), mentioned only by Procopius. J. Kovačević was the first researcher, who, mainly according to archaeological and numismatic material, suggested the identification of Procopius' Βάβας with fortification near the rock under the oronym *Baba* near Prilep<sup>49</sup>. The identification proposed by Kovačević is fairly certain, primarily due to the

<sup>46</sup> H. FRISK, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch...*, p. 1088. Almost the same in P. CHANTRAINNE, *Dictionnaire étymologique...*, p. 1246.

<sup>47</sup> R.S.P. BEEKES, L. VAN BECK, *Etymological Dictionary...*, p. 1625.

<sup>48</sup> М.Д. ПЕТРУШЕВСКИ, ΓΑΛΑΔΡΑ = ΧΑΡΑΔΡΑ, ΓΑΛΑΔΡΟΣ = ΧΑΡΑΔΡΟΣ (=KA-RA-DO-RO), *ЖА* 16.1–2, 1966, p. 310.

<sup>49</sup> J. КОВАЧЕВИЌ, Βάβας, [in:] *Зборник посветен на Бошко Бабиќ = Mélange Boško Babić: 1924–1984*, vol. V, Прилеп 1986, p. 119.

indisputable material evidence. Supporting his position with the opinion of K. Jireček that the Slavs used to replace incomprehensible geographical terms with similar sounding Slavic ones, he equates fort-name Βάβας with the well-known Slavic term *Баба*, which was usually used to denote *mountain peaks, rocks and mountains themselves*. The prominent Bulgarian linguist, Vladimir Georgiev, went even further and claimed its Slavic origin, connecting it with the root *baba* which denotes *the name of grandmother* in most of the Slavic languages. Moreover, Georgiev considered the name of the fortress Βάβας, among several others, as one of the most certain examples of Slavic names in Procopius' *Buildings*<sup>50</sup>. We, however, are of the opinion that his arguments are linguistically unfounded<sup>51</sup>. Serbian Prof. M. Budimir believes that the linguistic basis of *baba* is, actually, a very widespread and common anthroponym of theophoric origin among the ancient Bryges, or Phryges, the people of ancient Balkan, from where it also passed into Greek as the male and female name<sup>52</sup>. Actually, explaining the term *бабуни* he mentioned the cult of *Baba*, the main deity of fertility among the Balkan and Anatolian Bryges. Budimir claims that the word originates from the cultic Indo-European term *\*baba*. In addition, anthroponymic data also supports this thesis. Namely, names like *Babyllus* and *Babylon*, with an undisputable stem *-bab* are epigraphically attested in Macedonia in the village of Raštani, near Veles, i.e. in Eordaia<sup>53</sup>. Names with the same root are common in Phrygia, Lycaonia and other parts of Asia Minor, and an unidentified toponym *Baba* was attested in Armenia as well<sup>54</sup>. Besides, the personal name of the military commander Βάβας is also mentioned by Procopius in *Wars*, although the name is not epigraphically attested in Macedonia<sup>55</sup>. Procopius says that *he was from Thrace*, but this statement does not imply that he was an ethnic Thracian. F. Papazoglu rightly points out the complexity of the relations of the entire series of epichorion names in Macedonia with the Thracian due to the traditional treatment of the Thracian – Phrygian/Brygian as a unique linguistic area<sup>56</sup>. This example clearly shows and confirms the opinion of the modern linguistics that the Paeonian and Phrygian/Brygian have to be considered

<sup>50</sup> В. ГЕОРГИЕВ, *Найстарите славянски имена...*, p. 323.

<sup>51</sup> Sceptic concerning Slavic place names in Procopius *Buildings* is also G. HOLZER, *Gibt es slavische Kastellnamen in Prokops De aedificiis?*, FOC 7, 1998, p. 115–129.

<sup>52</sup> М. БУДИМИР, *Са балканских источника*, Београд 1969, p. 144.

<sup>53</sup> А. ΡΙΖΑΚΗΣ, Ι. ΤΟΥΡΑΤΣΟΓΛΟΥ, *Επιγραφές Άνω Μακεδονίας*, том. Α', Αθήνα 1985, p. 136; Б. ЈОСИФОВСКА, *Неколку неиздадени грчки и латински натписи од Македонија*, *ЖА* 3.1–2, 1953, p. 222–244.

<sup>54</sup> L. DILLEMAN, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacentes. Contribution à la géographie historique de la région, du V<sup>e</sup> s. avant l'ère chrétienne au VI<sup>e</sup> s. de cette ère*, Paris 1962 [= IFAB.BAH, 72], p. 137, 141; *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, ed. R.J.A. TALBERT, Princeton 2000, Map 89 Armenia, 1282.

<sup>55</sup> ПРОКОПИЈУС, *History of the Wars*, vol. V, Books 7.36–8. (*Gothic War*), VIII, 9, 7, trans. H.B. DEWING, Cambridge Massachusetts 1928 [= LCL, 217].

<sup>56</sup> Ф. ПАΠΑЗОГЛУ, *Етничка структура Античке Македоније у светлости новијих ономастичких истраживања*, *Balc* 8, 1977 (= *Зборник у част 80-годишњице академика Васе Чубриловића*, ed. М. БЕГОВИЋ, Београд 1977), p. 77.

as Indo-European languages separate from the Thracian. According to our opinion, due to the many registered analogies, written and epigraphic, we truly believe that the name of Procopius' fortification Βάβαϝ attested in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD is epichoric. The name originates from the Indo-European root *\*baba* 'stone, rock, cliff' and it belongs to the old, Pre-Greek linguistics stratum, most probably Phrygian, with the suffix -αϝ in the nominative singular, common in the later development of the Greek language<sup>57</sup>.

In conclusion, we can say that we truly believe that all these examples have clearly and sufficiently proven the presence of Pre-Greek linguistic substrate in the respective lists of place names enumerated by Procopius in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It's quite understandable and reasonable to expect such results, bearing in mind the nature of buildings recorded by this author, most of them fortresses, which were primarily erected as watchtowers in strategic positions for defense. These strategic fortifications, for the most part, inherited both the name and location as it is confirmed by older ancient sources, and they were, usually, naturally defensible spots on the hills, mountain passes, gorges, which have always strategic value to protect against invasions. Only a few of them were built contemporarily to Procopius, instead, they often have been rebuilt with the new name – commonly a personal name of a veteran whose land property in the uncertain times of barbaric incursions served as a shelter for the local population. These place-names confirm that this Pre-Greek substrate is a significant factor in the toponymy of the later era and therefore its systematic study is of great importance. Additionally, it is necessary to have in mind a very important fact that, along with hydronymy and oronymy, toponymy itself is essentially the most conservative linguistic discipline which in this sense, is truly confirmed as *the language of the soil, a guard of linguistic memories which survive human generations and buildings*.

<sup>57</sup> Concerning Procopius' Βάβαϝ in details: J. КУЗМАНОВСКА, *Један Прокопијев топоним из списка за Македонију*, Глa 55.1–2, 2011, p. 65–69. The researcher V. Polak came to, more or less, the same conclusion concerning the term *baba* as a substrate relic denoting 'rocky places, cliffs, caves' in an article that, unfortunately, wasn't available to me at the time of my doctoral work on Procopius' toponyms. V. POLAK, *Considérations sur la toponymie balkanique*, OJug 4, 1979, p. 32.

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**Jasminka Kuzmanovska**

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje  
 Department of Ancient and Medieval History  
 Institute of National History  
 Grigor Prličev 3, 1000 Skopje  
 Republic of North Macedonia  
[kuzmanovska.jasmina@gmail.com](mailto:kuzmanovska.jasmina@gmail.com)