

Fridrik THORDARSON

GALLIA ALANICA

(Studia Iranica et Alanica. Rome. 1998)

“But I must lay stress upon the participation of the Alans in the conquest of the Roman empire, and upon the extreme importance of the Iranian element in the conquering armies of Goths and Huns...”

M. Rostovtzeff: *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, p. 119.

1. In spite of these words, written by the great Russian historian in 1922, the part played by the Alans in the Great Migrations is frequently underestimated or even entirely overlooked. This is no doubt, at least in part, due to insufficient knowledge (or total ignorance) of the historical background of the Alans, and their identity as an individual people, distinct from the Germanic tribes with whom they were allied. Undoubtedly the Alans were less numerous than their Germanic confederates; besides, they were early assimilated to the indigenous populations with whom they mixed. Nevertheless, vestiges of their residence in various places in the Western Roman Empire have remained until this day; probably the most tangible evidence of their presence is found in the toponymy of France, northern Italy and the Iberian Peninsula.

In 1973 B. S. Bachrach published a monograph on the Alans in western Europe (BACHRACH 1973). In spite of some shortcomings regarding the (unfortunately rather sparse) linguistic Alanic material this work seems to be the most thorough modern treatment of this subject. For the following notes it has been indispensable, although it is not always referred to where it has been used. One of its great merits is an exhaustive bibliography of the relevant Latin sources.

2. On the last day of the year 406 great hords of Vandals, Swabians and Alans began to cross the Rhine in the neighbourhood of Mainz (Mogontia-

cum), invading Roman Gaul. Here they met Frankish tribes, who had already settled on the left bank of the river as Roman foederati. There is evidence that the Alan hosts, who were led by Goar and Respendial, had already in the late third century seceded from the chief part of the Ponto- Caspian Alans and migrated to the Danubian basin (Reallex. d. german. Altertumskunde, 1973, B. I, p. 122 ff.: *Alani*). At the time of the crossing of the Rhine the Alan invaders were already split into two sections; one, led by Respendial, had remained loyal to its Vandal and Swabian allies; the other, under the leadership of Goar, had come to terms with the Romans; – cf. the words of the Roman historian Frigidus, quoted by Gregory of Tours (538-594) in his History of the Franks: “As Goar had gone over to the Romans, Respendial, the king of the Alans, withdrew his army from the Rhine, while the Vandals fought against the Franks. And when Godegisel, the king of the Vandals, was dead and close on 20 thousand men had been killed, it might well have happened that the whole Vandal people had been extirpated, if an Alan force had not come to their rescue in time”. (Gregorius Turonensis, Hist, lib., II, ch. 9)¹.

Some years later we find Goar meddling in Roman politics in Gaul. In 412 a Gallo-Roman officer, Jovinus by name, was proclaimed Roman emperor on his initiative. However, the next year Jovinus was killed after being defeated and captured by the Visigoths. In the 440ies we meet Goar again as the king of the Alans who had been settled by the Romans in the Loire Valley, in part at least, in order to suppress the *Bacaudae*, a sort of revolutionary guerilla, largely consisting of impoverished peasants, who at this time threatened Roman power in Gaul. To all appearances this Goar is identical with the Alan king of the invasion in 406.

3. In Gaul the Alans split into at least three groups. The first group, led by Goar, was settled by Aëtius, the virtual ruler of the Western Roman Empire, in the Loire area (Orléanais), with Orléans as their capital. The Alans of the Orléanais played an important part in Roman, especially Gaulish, politics in the 5th century, and have left numerous vestiges of their one-time settlements. About 450 Goar was succeeded by Sangibanus, another Alan chieftain. Sangibanus and his Alan troops fought on the Roman side in the battle on the Catalaunian Planes in 451, when Attila and the Huns were defeated and the Hunnish threat averted from the Roman Empire. About 460 the Alan kingdom of the Orléanais was defeated and subjected to the Franks. After this the Alan kingdom seems to disappear from history as a separate ethnic and political power.

Another group of Alans, who apparently remained loyal to their Germanic confederates, migrated to southern France, where they were provided with lands by the Romans. From here the Alans and the Vandals invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 409. In 416 the invaders were attacked by the Visigoths, who on

this occasion acted in the interest of the Romans. The Alans were defeated and nearly wiped out. In southern France a handful of place names, mainly found in the region between Toulouse and the Mediterranean (ancient Gallia Narbonensis), testify to the Alan Colonization: *Alenya* (Pyrénées-Orientales), *Alaigne* (Aude), etc. (see BACHRACH, o.c, p. 30). Although the Alan residence in the Iberian Peninsula (chiefly in Lusitania, modern Portugal) was of short duration and of less importance than was that of the Orleanais, we are here still reminded of their presence by a small group of place names: *Puerta del Alano* (Huesca), *Villalan* (Valladolid), *Alanis* (Sevilla) (see BACHRACH, o.c., p.138).

In 429 Gaiseric, the king of the Vandals and the Alans, crossed the Gibraltar Strait into the Roman province of Mauretania. Their rule of this province was officially recognized by Rome in 435. However, this agreement was broken, and the invaders moved eastwards and founded a kingdom in the province of Africa. From this base they for some time ruled the western part of the Mediterranean, occupying both Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia. The king of this empire adopted the title *Rex Vandalorum et Alanorum* (Greek *Vandilōn kè Alanōn vasilevs*). The North African state of the Vandals and the Alans lasted until 533, when it was conquered by the armies of Justinian, the Byzantine emperor. To the best of my knowledge no toponymic or other linguistic vestiges, testifying to the presence of Alans in North Africa, have been found. – Regarding the history of the Alan-Vandal symbiosis I refer to BACHRACH, o.c., passim, and COURTOIS 1955.

About 440 a third group of Alans were settled in Valentinois, along the Rhone, where they were allotted lands by Aetius. A few place names seem to bear witness to the residence of Alans in this area (northeast of Lyon, but also in the département of Drôme), e.g.: *Alain* (dep. of Ain), *Alaincourt* (Haute-Saône, south of the Lake of Geneva), *Allan*, *Alançon* (Drôme), *Aliens* (in Switzerland, north of the Lake of Geneva), etc. (see BACHRACH, o.c., p. 68 and 137 ff.).

Also in northeastern France, that part of Gaul which was first invaded by the Alans, a bunch of place names indicate the existence of their settlements: *Alaincourt* (at various places), *Allamont* (Meurthe-et-Moselle), *Alain* (Meurthe-et-Moselle), etc. (see BACHRACH, o.c., p. 59 ff., 137 ff.).

At the beginning of the 5th century Alan mercenaries were recruited by Stilicho, the minister and commander of the Emperor Honorius, in defence of Italy against Alaric and his invading Visigoths. These troops were eventually given lands for settlement in various places in northern Italy, where the toponymy still seems to give evidence of their residence: *Alagna*, *Allain*, *Allegno*, etc. (see BACHRACH, o.c., p. 33 ff., 137 ff.).

Regarding place names containing the element *Alan(o)-* as reliable sources of Alan settlements, see below.

4. Among the place names of France there is quite a number of derivatives from the ethnic name of the Sarmatians (Lat. *Sarmatae*). These are frequently found in the vicinity of place names containing the element *Alan(o)*- or in areas where Alan settlements are attested by the historical sources:

Sermaise (several places in the Loire area); *Sermaize* (dép. of Marne, northeastern France); *Sarmazes* (dép. of Orne, region of Basse-Normandie); *Sermoise* (several places in central France); *Salmaise*, *Saumaise* (both Côte-d'Or, region of Bourgogne, eastern France); *Sermage* (dép. of Nièvre, region of Bourgogne) – all apparently from Lat. *Sarmasia* (*Sarmatia*) or *Sarmasias* (nom.-acc. plur.); – *Sermizelles* < *Sarmatiolae* (*Sarmisoliae* attested 1199) (dép. Yonne, region of Bourgogne). See LONGNON 1920-29, p. 132 ff.; d'ARBOIS de JUBAINVILLE 1890, p. 414; and, in general, DAUZAT & ROSTAING 1978, p. 640.

These names are not in the list of place names in BACHRACH 1973, p. 137 ff.; but see BACHRACH 1967.

Whether, or to which extent, *Alani* and *Sarmatae* were used as synonymous ethnic terms can not be decided here. But so much is certain that both types of place names together testify to Iranian immigrants from the steppes of South Russia taking permanent residence in Roman Gaul.

5. The Alans did not come to Gaul as conquerors, at least not in theory, but as federates (*foederati*) of the Romans. Their political and economic rights were based on *hospitalitas*, i.e. like the Germanic tribes they were settled on Gaulish land as *hospites* (literally “guests, strangers”) and got a certain part of the yield of the allotted land. That they in actual fact frequently behaved like conquerors appears from contemporaneous literary sources. Thus in *Chronica Gallica*, under the years 441-442, we read the following account (ed. MOMMSEN, 1892, p. 660):

“The Alans (of the Orleanais), to whom land had been given by the Patriarch Aetius so that it should be shared with the inhabitants, subdued their resistance with arms, and having expelled the landowners, took possession of the land with force”.²

As to the picture given by contemporaneous writers of the ravages of the Germanic and Alan invaders, I refer to COURCELLE 1964, *passim*.

The settlement of the Alans in Gaul served above all Roman strategic purposes. In southern Gaul they represent an attempt to hold the Visigoths in check. In northeastern France and the Orleanais they constitute a second line of defence west of the Rhine. In other words, the invaders were used to control each other. As already mentioned, the Alans were also in part used to quell the insurrections of the *Bacaudae* who threatened Roman power in Gaul. The reputation of the Alans, as well as the other peoples of the Ponto-Caspian steppes,

as good warriors and, in particular, as eminent cavalry men, is well attested by Greek and Roman authors.

6. The establishment of the Alans as military colonists in Gaul had the inevitable result that they had to give up their nomadic way of life for a sedentary one. As likely as not, their hordes largely consisted of men who were dependent on indigenous women for their progeny, a situation which must be common among warlike immigrants (cf., e.g., the Norman invaders of Normandy in the 9th century). Women are, however, mentioned among the Alans in Gaul.

The Alans who invaded the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century had long before the invasion severed their relations with their kinsmen in South Russia, and had no hinterland that might have strengthened their national and cultural identity. In these matters the situation of the Germanic invaders was somewhat different; nevertheless they all but disappeared as individual peoples. The Alans who created the ephemeral Gaulish states in the 5th century were probably of mixed blood and heterogeneous as regards their linguistic composition; most likely ethnic terms like *Alani* or *Sarmatae* in many cases only refer to the origin of the royal clan or dynasty of the tribe. We have no reason to believe that the Alanic-speaking part of the immigrants was numerous. (On these and related questions see VERNADSKY 1951 and 1963, with certain reservations regarding his etymologies.)

The acceptance of orthodox Roman Christianity by the Alans of Gaul (the Alans of North Africa were Arians) is also a fact that may have facilitated their assimilation to the indigenous population.

All this explains the Alan's propensity of getting absorbed by the Latin- and Celtic-speaking inhabitants of Gaul. In all probability the Alan immigrants rapidly gave up their Iranian language (if they had not done it before the invasions). As far as I know, they have exerted no influence upon the development of Gaulish Latin; there seem to be no Alanic loanwords in French. Italian, Spanish *alano*, Provençal and Old French *alan* (the word is obsolete in modern French), the name of a race of dogs, has been explained as deriving from the ethnic name *Alanus*, but it is of course a Latin, not an Alanic word (MEYER-LUBKE 1935, p. 24). *Goar* is found as a proper name in the Aquitaine in the south of France in the 6th century (St. Goar, who emigrated to the Rhineland, where a small town still bears his name, St. Goar, in the vicinity of the Lorelei Cliff). According to DAUZAT (1951, p. 295) *Goar* is used as a proper name in Brittany, but he explains the name as deriving from Breton ("nom Breton"), a nickname meaning "twisted, distorted" ("tordu"). If this be correct, we would here have two homonyms of different origin.³ There seems to be a general agreement that the French and Anglo-Norman name Alain, Allain (both a first

name and a family name) derives from the ethnic name *Alanus*; this name has been borne by a number of French saints and several dukes and counts in Brittany in the Middle Ages (see DAUZAT 1951, p.4). But this is a Latin name and reflects Alan residence in Gaul only indirectly.

In the Life of St. Germanus, the bishop of Auxerre (ca. 378-448), written by Bishop Constance of Lyon in the last decades of the 5th century, we read a dramatic account of a meeting between St. Germanus and Goar, the Alan king of the Orléanais. The latter, *ferox Alanorum rex* “the savage king of the Alans” as he is called in the text, has been sent with his hosts to Armoricae by Aëtius to suppress a rebellion of the Bacaudae, but is met on his way and miraculously interrupted by St. Germanus; according to the account of the Life their negotiations were carried on through an interpreter (*medio... interprete*); unfortunately the author does not tell us which languages were used in these negotiations (Vita Germani, ed. Krusch & Levison, ch. 28). If King Goar of Orléanais (440ies) is identical with Goar, the Alan king of 406 (cf. above), he must have belonged to the first generation of Alan immigrants in Gaul (and as a political leader perhaps not always in complete agreement with the mentality of his more advanced subjects). In the same text Goar is termed “attendant of idols” (*idolorum minister*); if this is anything but a literary cliché, it must mean that Goar is supposed to have retained his pagan faith more than a generation after the invasion.

The cultural influence that the Alans may have exerted upon the peoples of the Western Roman Empire during the Great Migrations is outside the scope of these notes, and I must confine myself to some few remarks on the French place names which contain the element *Alan(o)-* (the “Alanophoric” place names, if such a monstrous neologism is permissible), particularly those of the Orléanais, that part of France where the evidence of Alan residence is strongest.

7. BACHRACH (1973, p. 137 ff.) lists 53 place names that seem to contain, or can be shown to have contained, the lexical element *Alan(o)-*. In addition there are three place names, derived from other noun stems, that may be connected with Alan residence in Gaul. Of the 53 “Alanophoric” names 7 are located in Italy, 3 in the Iberian Peninsula, 1 in Switzerland. The rest are French. The list is not exhaustive. Not all the etymologies given by Bachrach are unassailable, and in a few cases other explanations have been suggested. According to DAUZAT & ROSTAING (1978, p. 9) *Alençon* (twice in the dep. of Drôme, in the Rhone area, also in Orne, Basse-Normandie) derives from a Gaulish proper name *Alantius* plus a suffix *-onem* (Lat. acc. sing.; – the form *Alencione* is recorded in Merovingian times).

As might have been expected, these place names are mainly found in

southwestern, northern and northeastern France, in the Orleanais, Touraine and the adjacent regions, and in the Rhone area; four are located in Brittany. Names like *Alainville* (*Aillainville*), *Alaincourt* (*Allancourt*), with inversion *Courta-lain Allamont* (*de Alani monie* is found in a document from 1194) are formed from the noun *Alanus* in the singular (the genitive case): plus Latin *villa*, *cohortis*, *mons* (“village or settlement, mountain” resp.). Derivation from the genitive plural would have resulted in something like **Alainourville*, cf. *Fran-courville*, *Goudourville* < *Francorum/Gothorum villa*. *Alanus* can be either the ethnic or the proper name. As most (but not all) of these place names are recorded for the first time in the historical documents several centuries after we must assume that the Alanic language had become extinct in Gaul, at a time when *Alanus* had become a common proper name, this is a question that can hardly be answered with certainty. The same seems to apply to place names like *Alain*, *Allain*, *Alains*, *Allaines* (unless some of them are original plural forms?). But *Alaigne*, *Alenya*, *Alleigne* (all in France), as well as *Alagna* (Italy), *Alange* (*Alanje*, Spain) apparently derive from Latin *Alania* “the place, settlement of the Alans”.

In general, it seems clear that the Alan place names of Gaul, as well as those of northern Italy and the Iberian Peninsula, are of *Latin* derivation, though some, or even most, of them may indicate Alan residence, i.e., they are names given to the places by the Latin-speaking population. They are thus only an indirect evidence of Alan residence in Gaul or elsewhere in the Western Roman Empire. As far as I am aware, *Alanic* has not been adduced for the explanation of obscure French, Italian or Ibero-Romance place names. This is, of course, no matter for surprise, when we consider the absence of Alanic loanwords in the vocabulary of these languages. A promising field of research might here be the micro-toponymy of the areas where Alan settlements are known to have existed. But in all probability, the words would be distorted beyond recognition, so that the etymologizing would hardly ever pass the stage of a linguistic game.

8. *Langeais* is the name of a small town in the Loire valley, situated some 25 kilometres west of Tours, in the departement of Indre-et-Loire, in an area where Alan settlements are known to have existed and which was under Alan rule at least for some decades in the 5th century.

The earliest recorded name of the town appears to be *Alangavia* or *Alingavia*. In his History of the Franks Gregory of Tours tells us about the activities of St. Martin of Tours in the following words (St. Martin ca. 315-397, but the text is written in the latter half of the 6th century):

In monasterio vero qui nunc Maior dicitur basilicam in honore sanctorum Petri et Pauli aedificavit. In vicis quoque, id est *Alingaviensi* (v.l. Alingaveensi),

Solonacensi, Ambaciensi, Cisomagensi, Tornomagensi, Condatensi, destructis delubris baptizatisque gentilibus, ecclesias aedificavit “in the monastery which now is called the Greater (modern Marmoutier) he built a basilica in honour of the holy apostles Peter and Paul. He also built churches in the towns (villages) of *Langeais*, Somnay, Amboise, Ciran, Tournon and Candes, having destroyed the pagan sanctuaries and baptized the heathen” (Greg. Tur., Hist, lib., X, ch. 31).

In *The Glory of the Martyrs* by the same author we read the following words referring to *Langeais*:

Sub hujus urbis territorio apud *vicum Alangaviensem* (v.l. Langaviensem, Lanviense)... “near the territory of this city, at the village (town) of *Langeais*...” (Greg. Tur., *De gloria martyrum*, ed. Bordier, t. I, 1857, ch. XVI).

Alingavias (nom.-acc. plur.) is found as a monetary legend from Merovingian times.

For the variant forms of this place name I refer to HOLDER 1896, p. 93, and GAMILLSCHEG 1934, p. 103).

There has been no agreement regarding the etymology of this place name.

According to DAUZAT & ROSTAING (1978, p. 385) *Alangavia/Alingavia* derives from a root preserved in the Celtic ethnic name *Lingones* plus a suffix *-avus*, also found in other place names of Celtic origin. The tribe of the *Lingones*, who are mentioned by Caesar (*Bellum Gallicum*, I, ch. 26 & passim) and later authors, lived in the Vosges mountains, near the sources of the Meuse and the Marne rivers, i.e. in eastern France, far away from the Touraine area (the *Lingones* are, however, also mentioned in northern Italy, Polybius II, ch. 17 and Livy V, ch. 34); their name is supposed to survive in the name of the city of Langres, formerly *Andematunum* (*Lingonum*), in the dé p. of Haute-Marne, region of Champagne (see RE, vol. 13/1927, col. 714 ff., where the tribal name is connected with Irish *lingid* “springs, runs”, i.e. “die Springer (auf ihren Rossen)”). This theory hardly accounts for the initial *A-* of *Alangavia/A lingavia*.

GRÖHLER (1913, p. 310) also seeks an explanation in a Celtic tribal name. According to his theory *Alangavia/Alingavia* is derived from *Alingo-* plus a suffix *-avo-*. This tribal name is supposed to occur in the name of the town *Alingonis Portus* (Sidonius Apollinaris, 5th century), now *Langon* (dép. of Gironde, south of Bordeaux); also *Alingonensis ecclesia* (Paulinus Nolanus, 4th century). This etymology, that seems preferable to the above-mentioned one, was rejected by Gamillscheg for phonetic reasons (see below).

GAMILLSCHEG (1934, p. 103; 1938, p. 131) explains *Alangavia/Alingavia* as deriving from a Frankish place name, **Alingawi*, formed from a proper name **Ali(n)-* (< **Alya-* with syncope, i.e. “stranger, guest”, cf. FÖRSTEMANN 1900, p. 79, and KAUFMANN 1968, p. 30-31) plus German-

ic (Frankish) *gawi-*, cf. modern German *Gau* “district”, Gothic *gawi* “country, neighbourhood” etc.⁴ According to Gamillscheg the sound change *-gawi* > *-že* (Langavia > Lanze) is regular, whereas *-avum*, presupposed by the above-mentioned theories, would not have resulted in *-že*.

If Gamillscheg can be trusted, place names of Germanic origin are extremely rare in the Loire area; even some of the names he mentions are questionable. Besides, Gamillscheg gives no other example of *-gawi* as a constituent in place names dating from Frankish times neither in this area nor elsewhere in northern France. It also seems an unnecessary trouble to adduce a (hypothetical?) Germanic proper name for the explanation of a place name like *Alangavia/ Alingavia*, found in an area where the proper/ethnic name *Alanus* and place names derived from it are common.

9. A wholly different idea occurred to me many years ago, as I spent some pleasant summer days in Langeais and Tours. Like the theories referred to above it can not be proved (but possibly disproved). I hope that the Nestor of Ossetic and Alanic philology, whom I want to honour with these remarks, will not take it amiss if I advance this idea here.

Ossetic (Iron) *qæw* (Digor *ğæw*) “village, town” has been explained as going back to Old Iranian **gawa-* (**gawya-* would possibly have resulted in **qæwy/ğæwi*, cf. *dæсны/dæсни* “a clever man” < **daš(i)nya-*, *xoly/xwali* “carrion” < **x̣̌ārya-*), a thematic derivative from Aryan **gaw-* “cow, ox”. The original sense must have been “enclosure for cattle, cattle pen”, reflecting the ancestors’ nomadic way of life (ABAEV 1973, p.299-301).

I see no reason to call this etymology in question. In the Avesta *gava-* is attested several times in the sense “settlement, village, cattle station”, possibly also as a place name:

Yt. 10,14: *gaomča suxδəm* (ace. sing.) “towards the Sogdian village, settlement” (or *Gava-* a place name?).

Vend. *gāum yim suğδnō.šayanəm* “the settlement (or a place name?) where the Sogdians live”.

Yt. 10,15: *avi imaṭ karšvarə yaṭ x’aniraθəm, bāmīm gavašayanəm gavašitīmča baēšazyəm* “towards that splendid clime which is X^vaniraθa, the land of settled dwelling and healthy village colonization” (GERSHEVITCH 1959, p. 81).

Cf. also Sanskrit *gavya-* adj. “consisting of cattle”, *gavyam* (neuter noun) “cattle” (RV+). Regarding *gava-pati-* “lord of the cattle” as an indirect evidence for Old Iranian **gava-* see ABAEV 1973, p. 299-301; cf. also BAILEY 1946, p. 14, and GERSHEVITCH, o.c., p. 174 ff.).

Consequently, we may assume that **ğawam* is an ancient Alanic word, used in the sense “settlement, village”. Alanic was certainly spoken by at least some social or local groups at the time of the colonization of the Loire Valley,

during the first decades of the 5th century, and it has in all probability lingered on, at worst as a second language in some milieus, for a couple of generations; as a rule a social or national group would require at least two generations to get rid of its native speech.

If this line of thought is permissible, *Alangavia/Alingavia* is a compound noun, where *Alan-/Alin-* represents either the ethnic or proper name *Alanus*, while *-gavia* is a Latinization of Alanic **ǵawa-* (or possibly **ǵawya-*). It would thus be formed after the same pattern as *Alainville*, *Alaincourt* < *Alani villa*, cohortis : **Alani ǵaw(y)am*.

The most evident objection against this etymology is the total absence of **ǵawa-* (and any other Alanic word, as far as we know) in the toponymy of France. But this argument is valid against Frankish *gawi* as well.

NOTES

1. Interea Respendial rex Alanorum, Goare ad Romanos transgresso, de Rheno agmen suorum convertit, Wandalis Francorum bello laborantibus, Godigyselo rege absumpto, aciae viginti ferme milibus ferro peremptis, cunctis Wandalorum ad internitionem delendis, nisi Alanorum vis in tempore subvenisset: Gregorius Turonensis: Libri historiarum 11,9.

Actually, the best manuscripts have *Alamannorum* instead of *Alanorum*. But this confusion of the *Alani* and the *Alamanni* is common in Latin texts, and there is general agreement among scholars upon *Alanorum* as the correct reading.

2. Alani, quibus terrae Galliae ulterioris cum incolis dividendae a Patrick Aetio traditae fuerant, resistentes armis subigunt et expulsis dominis terrae possessionem vi adipiscuntur: Chronica Gallica, p.660.

3. *Goar* *Abaev* explains as a compound noun consisting of Iranian **gaw-* “cow, ox” and the verbal stem *ar-* “to get, find” (Iron *aryn*, South Ossetic *waryn*); this type of compound nouns is found in modern Ossetic: *læg-xor* “man-eater”, *ræǵaw-gæš* “horse-herd”, and is well known in Old Iranian, e.g. Avestan *sāra.vāra-* “helmet”, lit. “that which covers the head”, cf. also Skt. *ahi-ghna-* “dragon-killer”, etc. *Aspar*, the name of an Alan general in the service of the East Roman Empire (murdered in 468), is seemingly of the same type (“horse-finder”). A more likely etymology is **aspa-bāra-* “rider, horseman”, cf. Old Persian *asabāra-*, New Persian *suvār*, Pahlavi *aswār̥*. The Alanic name may, of course, be a borrowing from Middle Persian. See JUSTI 1895, p. 46; ABAEV 1979, p.289.

4. There seems to be no agreement as to the etymology of German *Gau* etc., and it has been suggested that it is a borrowing from Alanic (see ABAEV 1973, p. 299-301; FEIST 1939, p. 210-211). As the word is common to the continental Germanic languages and also found in Old English (but without cognates in Scandinavian), such a borrowing must be old and independent of the symbiosis of the Alan and Germanic tribes in Gaul.

REFERENCES

- ABAEV, V. I 1973: *Istoriko-etimologičeskij slovar' osetinskogo jazyka*. III. Leningrad.
- Same 1979: Skifo-sarmatskie narečija. In: *Osnovy iranskogo jazykoznanija. Drevneiranskije jazyki*. Moskva 1979.
- d'ARBOIS de JUBAINVILLE, H. 1890: *Recherches sur l'origine de la propriété foncière et les noms de lieux habités en France*. Paris.
- BACHRACH, B.S. 1967: *The Alans in Gaul. Traditio XXIII*. New York.
- Same 1973: *A History of the Alans in the West*. Minneapolis.
- Chronica Gallica*. Ed. T. Mommsen. Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctores antiquissimi, IX. Berlin 1892.
- (Constance of Lyon) *Constantius: Vita Germani episcopi Autissiodorensis*. Ed. B. Krusch & W. Levison. Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum. VII. Hannover & Leipzig 1920.
- COURCELLE, P. 1964: *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*. Paris.
- COURTOIS, Chr. 1955: *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*. Paris.
- DAUZAT, A. 1951: *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de famille et prénoms*. 3. éd. Paris.
- DAUZAT, A. & ROSTAING, Ch. 1978.: *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de lieux en France*. 2. éd. Paris.
- Dictionnaire topographique de la France, comprenant les noms de lieu anciens et modernes*. Paris. The relevant volumes.
- FEIST, S. 1939: *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der gotischen Sprache*. 3. Aufl. Leiden.
- FÖRSTEMANN, E. 1900: *Altdeutsches Namenbuch. B.I. 2. Aufl.* Bonn. H. Kaufmann: *Ergänzungsband*. München 1968.
- GAMILLSCHEG, E. 1934: *Romania Germanica. B. I. Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*. 11,1. Berlin & Leipzig.
- Same 1938: *Germanische Siedlungen in Belgien und Nordfrankreich*. Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Jg. 1937. Philos.-hist. Klasse. Nr. 12. Berlin.
- GERSHEVITCH, I. 1959: *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*. Cambridge.
- (Gregory of Tours: History of the Franks) *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis libri historiarum X*. Ed. B. Krusch & W. Levison. Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum, I. Hannover 1951.
- (Same: The Glory of the Martyrs) *Gregorius Turonensis: De gloria martyrum*. Les livres des miracles et autres opuscules de George Florent Grégoire. Ed. H.L. Bordier, t. I. Paris 1857.
- GRÖHLER, H. 1913: *Über Ursprung und Bedeutung der französisohen Ortsnamen*. I. Heidelberg.
- HOLDER, A. 1896: *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz. B.I.* Leipzig.
- JUSTI, F. 1895: *Iranisches Namenbuch*. Marburg. (Reimpr. Hildesheim 1963.)

KAUFMANN, H.: see FÖRSTEMANN E. 1900.

LONGNON, A. 1920-1929: *Les noms de lieu de la France. Leur origine, leur signification, leur transformations*. Paris.

MEYER-LÜBKE, W. 1935: *Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. 3. Aufl. Heidelberg. *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, I. Berlin 1973.

RE = Pauly-Wissowa: *Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, B. 13. Stuttgart 1927.

ROSTOVITZ (Rostovcev), M. 1922: *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*. Oxford. (Reimpr. New York 1969.)

VERNADSKY, G. 1951; Der sarmatische Hintergrund der germanischen Völkerwanderung. *Saeculum II*. München.

Same 1963: Eurasian Nomads and their Impact on Medieval Europe. *Studi medievali*, ser. 3, IV. Torino.

(A detailed bibliography is found in Bachrach 1973)