

Han Steenwijk  
ORCID: 0000-0002-4612-8611

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**Han Steenwijk** (ORCID: 0000-0002-4612-8611)

Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies, University of Padova, Italy

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## **ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF VAL RESIA AND SOME OF ITS TOPONYMS OR: HOW THE RESIANS LOST THEIR NAME**

On the basis of the earliest toponyms and administrative documents pertaining to Val Resia a hypothesis on the Alpine Slavic settlement, the original name of these settlers and the early Medieval development of the valley is proposed. The identical name for the village of San Giorgio and for the valley as a whole during this period turns out to be an important fact in favour of this hypothesis.

KEYWORDS: Resia, Medieval history, toponyms, demonyms

Na podlagi najstarejših toponimov in uradnih dokumentov, ki se nanašajo na dolino Rezija, se predlaga domneva o alpskoslovanski naselitvi, izvornem imenu naseljencev in zgodnj srednjeveškem razvoju doline. Isto poimenovanje za vas San Giorgio in za celotno dolino v tem obdobju se pri tem pokaže kot pomembno dejstvo v prid tej domnevi.

KEYWORDS: Rezija, srednjeveška zgodovina, toponimi, demonimi

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Comparing historical documents with the actually spoken language it appears that the settlement of San Giorgio di Resia was known by more than one name. In the earliest existing documents (12<sup>th</sup> century) the partly German, partly Latin comonym (a toponym denoting a village) <*aput Uelach superius*> is used, whereas in present-day Resian the comonyms *tu-w Bili* <slv. *\*ta u Běli* and *Šanğòrğ* = fri. *San 'Zòrz* are in use. Just like the modern form *tu-w Bili* also the historical name <*Uelach*>, i.e. mhg. *Vellach* = slv. *\*Běljah* is ultimately derived from csl. *\*běľь* 'white'. Comonyms with a similar etymology occur in and near the

German-Slovene bilingual area in Southern Austria, e.g. the inhabited areas Obere Fellach, Untere Fellach and Neufellach, furthermore the hydronym (a toponym indicating a body of water) Fellach, all at the north-western periphery of Villach. This shows that mhg. *Vellach* may be a hydronym as well a comonym. In Slovene originally a lexical distinction was made between hydronyms like *\*Běla* and the corresponding derived comonyms. Actually the prepositionless locative expression *\*Běljah* is an inflected form of the comonym *\*Běljane*, derived by conversion from yet another category of derived proper names, demonyms (*\*běljane* ‘the people living by the *\*Běla*’).

I will therefore start with a presentation of relevant proper names (hydronyms, demonyms and comonyms) in and around Val Resia that have etymologies deriving them from csl. *\*běľь*, and only then I will analyze the name changes pertaining to San Giorgio. As will be shown, San Giorgio’s names had some relevance for the naming of Val Resia as a whole, so choronyms (toponyms denoting a region) will have to be dealt with as well. The historical attestations being incomplete and open to interpretation, several hypothetical possibilities may lead to the situation that can be observed today. A clear distinction between ascertained facts and hypothetical developments will be maintained, therefore. To conclude, the results of the linguistic analysis will be compared with extra-linguistic data that may be helpful in explaining the name changes that occurred.

## 2 ETYMOLOGIES

### 2.1 *\*BĚĽb*; *\*BEL*, *\*VEL*

#### a) watercourses

For slv. *\*Běla* ‘Fella river’ no direct attestations have been found yet. For Resian Baudouin de Courtenay (1876: 223) reports *Féla*, and that same hydronym is found in present-day *ziljsko* as spoken in Val Canale/ Kanalska dolina: *Fě:la* (Laglesie San Leopoldo/Lipalja vas; Gliha Komac and Legan Ravnika 2016: 46), furthermore the house name *pər Fě:lə*

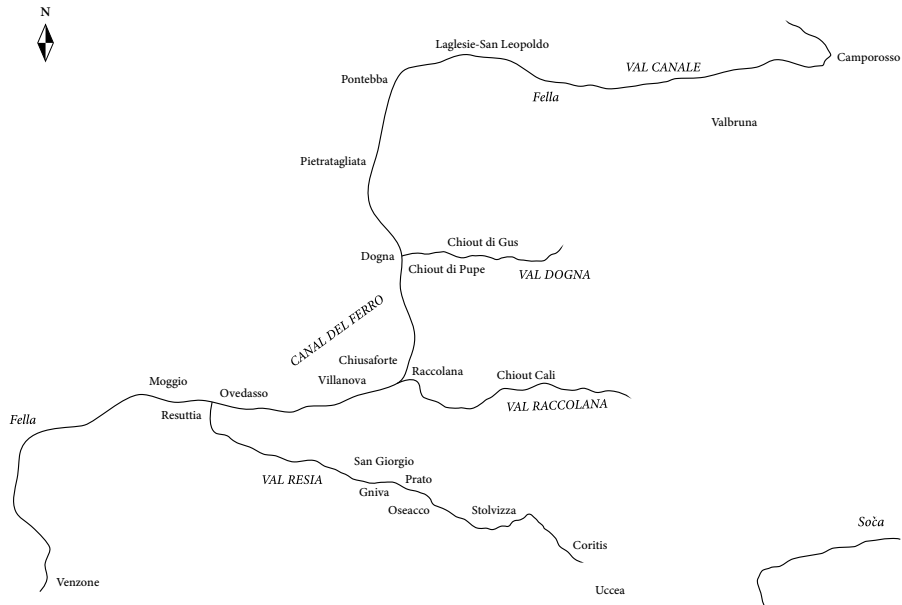


FIGURE 1: Northeastern Friuli

(Valbruna/Ovčja vas; Komac and Smole 2005: 50-51).<sup>1</sup> In German the upper course is called *Fellabach* and further downstream *Fellafluss*, that flows through the *Fellagraben* 'Canal del Ferro'. Just *Fella* may also be encountered in a German context. The attested dialectal Slovene forms are loans from fri. *Fèle* = ita. *Fella*, in Val Canale maybe from ger. *Fella*. For fri. *Fèle* three etymological explanations have been offered:

1. an indirect loan by way of German from slv. *\*Běla* = mhg. *\*Vellach* [ $>$  *\*Fellach* = fri. *Fèle*, HS] = ita. *Fella* (Kranzmayer 1934: 110-111, footnote 2). The substitution slv. *b* = ohg., mhg. *v* was valid from about 770 until around 1200. As High German lacked initial *b-*, in loans that contained this phone in the source language it was replaced by *v-*. As the mhg. sound

<sup>1</sup> Another dialectal form from Val Canale is possibly represented by *Fila*, that in Camporosso/Žabnice refers to the Fella river as well as to a part of the town (Pichler 1883: 157). However, as a toponym it is also put in relation with lat. *villa* 'estate, farm, country house'. Here also go the forms *Felza/Filza* [read *Felca/Filca*, HS] for a rivulet at the source of the Fella river (Cinausero 2003: 522).

change *v* > *f* is dated at around 1200, the loan must have entered Friulian after this date. The equation mhg. *Fellach* = fri. *Fèle* is not straightforward, however, as the Friulian form shows no trace of final mhg. *-ch* (Danelutto et al. 2004: 32). A hydronym like mhg. *\*Vellach* corresponds only indirectly to the Slovene hydronym *\*Běla* as it presupposes the existence of a homophonous place name, like Obere Fellach, Untere Fellach and Neufellach cited in the introduction. For a possible candidate for such a place name, see below when German names for Resiutta are discussed.

2. a derivation from a Pre-Latin root *\*bel*, *\*vel* ‘white’ (Frau 1978: 60). Probably a (not explained) development based on Proto-Celtic *\*belo-* ‘bright’ is meant in this case. This may then have entered Alpine Slavic as a loan, just like some other Pre-Latin toponyms (Danelutto et al. 2004: 32).

3. a folk etymology building on the association between the comonym *tana Bîle* ‘Resiutta’ and the hydronym *Fella* because Resiutta is located on the Fella river and its tributary Resia torrent, whereas the hydronym *Bila* ‘Resia torrent’ is not being used anymore (Hamp 1981: 11). This can at most be applied to a more recent situation, because in the not too distant past *Bila* was actually used for ‘Resia torrent’, for which see below.

For *\*Běla* ‘Resia torrent’ there are only a few attestations, mostly accompanied by qualifications: *Bila* (rarely used; Baudouin de Courtenay 1876: 228), *döpör bile* (for the part of the Resia torrent between Coritis and just downstream of Stolvizza; Hamp 1981: 15, footnote 1). Then we have the late 14<sup>th</sup> century attestation <*Flumen Bible*>, a hydronym that defies localisation and is also formally enigmatic (1382, transcribed from a manuscript and printed in or shortly after 1784).<sup>2</sup>

As a loan in German one can find <*Velach fluvio*> in a forged document that was produced during the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and backdated to 1070 (Härtel 1985: 51-52). The interpretation requires some work, as the hydronym is mentioned in connection with a toll bridge in Resiutta,

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. the context “Versus Meridionales Partes est quidam locus vocatus Lazones super Flumen Bible per Mezanasarem” (Matičetoč & Dapit 1994: 101). For none of the three proper names mentioned in the quote a corresponding modern form is known. The lexeme *flumen* does not necessarily refer to a large watercourse, because in another medieval document a brook close to Uccia is also described in this way, <*flumen Hulenegne*> (late 13<sup>th</sup> century; Kos 1954: 289).

where the Resia torrent flows into the Fella river, coming from the hydrographical left. At Resiutta the former Roman road, still in use during the Middle Ages, also follows the left bank and a toll bridge in that stretch of road at Resiutta is known to have existed at least since 1322 (Faleschini 2012: 70). Because of the geographical facts and because there existed a tendency to refer in forgeries to subjects that were the topic of the day at the time of forgery (Härtel 1985: 51), it is highly probable that with <Velach fluvio> the Resia torrent is meant and not the Fella river.

#### b. places and their inhabitants

The earliest attestation is from 1136,<sup>3</sup> the <aput Uelach superius> mentioned in the introduction, i.e. mhg. *Vellach*, a loan based on the Slovene prepositionless locative expression \*Běljah.

“... apud Uelach superius et inferius XXIII mansos ...” and further on in the same document “... alias XI massericias apud Uelach quas Penzo de Glemona sub nomine feudi possedit iniuste ....” (Härtel 1985: 82)

slv. Lpl \*Běljah < csl. \*Běl'achъ was originally a member of the paradigm of csl. Nsg \*běl'aninъ ~ Npl \*běl'ane, a demonym derived by means of the suffix csl. \*-'an(in)-. Starting from the expression csl. \*Běla voda 'Resia torrent' the partly derivational, partly morphological process involved is:

demonym Npl *běl'ane < hydronym *Běla (voda), cfr. <Velach fluvio> (1 <sup>st</sup> half 14 <sup>th</sup> century) demonym Lpl *běl'achъ
after derivation by conversion:
comonym Npl *Běl'ane comonym Lpl *Běl'achъ, cfr. <Uelach> (1136)*

TABLE 1: From \*Běla (voda) to Běl'ane

\* The palatal l' surfaces in German as a double ll accompanied by Umlaut when a preceding a, o, u is present, e.g. csl. *Dol'achъ* = mhg. *Döllach*, *Dellach*.

<sup>3</sup> Documents with a still older date are forgeries (Härtel 1986). One of them we just dealt with in connection with the hydronym <Velach fluvio>.

Therefore, csl. *Běl'ane*, Lpl *\*Běl'achъ* > slv. *\*Běl'jane*, Lpl *\*Běl'jah* originally meant 'the place where *\*běl'ane* live'. Similar demonyms in South and Eastern Slavic frequently developed into toponyms; just from the Slovene language area about a 100 such toponyms are known. In Resian the demonym paradigm can still be seen in O *Osoanë*, Lpl *tu-w Osoanëh*, but G *tu-w Osojah* < slv. Npl *\*Osojane*, Lpl *\*Osojah* < *\*osoje* 'shady side' (cfr. Andersen 2017: 24; Dapit 1998: 125-127). Schematically:

Npl <i>*Běl'jane</i> , <i>*Osojane</i>
Lpl <i>*Běl'jah</i> , <i>*Osojah</i>

TABLE 2: Resian comonyms in *-'ane*

Taking slv. *\*Osojah* as the point of departure the Friulian forms *Oseà/Oseàc* = ita. *Oseacco* came into existence. On the basis of the same Slovene expression in German the comonym *Ossiach* was created, well-known from the Ossiacher See to the Northeast of Villach. Whereas in German and Friulian the Lpl form served as the base for the loans,<sup>4</sup> In Slovene the Npl form is continued as a comonym. That may be the original form, e.g. *Gorjane*, *Grižane*, *Poljane* and also *Osojane*, or an analogically shortened one, e.g. *Dobje*, *Griže*, *Javorje*.

Going back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century quotes the varying use of the toponym draws attention, once without and once with specifying adjectives. This need not be due to negligence. According to Härtel (1985: 43-46) the document, a confirmation of the list of properties belonging to the Moggio abbey at the time of its foundation, is probably made up of out of a series of older documents that each mentions one certain property or a small group of properties. This justifies an independent analysis for each of the two quotes.

Context 1: Without further specification *<aput Uelach>* enters into an implicit opposition with other locations, that are not associated with the Resia torrent, in other words, other drainage basins. In this case

<sup>4</sup> As Rospond 1970: 56-60 pointed out, citing a prepositionless locative expression as "casus generale" for toponyms was a common practice among German scribes.

it is not a specific settlement that is meant, but a whole area. This fits the etymological meaning of the demonym *\*běljane* 'the people living by the *\*Běla'* very nicely, without which the choronym <*aput Uelach*> cannot have been derived. We therefore assume that the second quote is actually from an older document than the first.

Context 2: With the specifications <*superius*> and <*inferius*> we are dealing with an explicit opposition. The area by the Resia torrent is now split in two parts, an upper and a lower, that each deserves separate mention. What these two areas comprise cannot be decided by looking at the quote alone. Likewise the quote does not allow for conclusions on the relation between the demonym *\*běljane* and these two toponyms.<sup>5</sup> The demonym may well have continued to refer to all inhabitants of the Resia basin, thus severing its semantic and morphological ties with the toponyms, or it could by now refer specifically to the inhabitants within the upper and/or lower part of that basin. As we shall see below, this is not decisive for the subsequent course of events.

Context 3: A third series of attestations comes from a few documents written in 1202, 1211 and 1213, pertaining to a dispute between the Moggio abbey and the counts of Gorizia over the advocacy of the region in question. In those documents the expressions <*duabus villis Velach*> as well as <*Velach superius et inferius*> (Härtel 1985: 104-106) occur, i.e. they refer to two villages going by these toponyms. The original choronym has evidently split into two comonyms. For the relation of the demonym *\*běljane* to these comonyms the same holds as above. Whether there existed just two villages in the region or maybe more is left untold at this point.

Context 4: A fourth case shows yet another semantic relation between the toponyms in use. In an urbarium from about 1240 toponyms pointing to the form *\*Běljah* do not occur because they have been substituted by <*In Rescia superiori*> (Kos 1954: 299) and <*Risciutta*> (Kos 1954: 298), respectively. I assume that these two expressions

<sup>5</sup> A series of later documents also contains this wording. These are also confirmations of the original list of properties of the Moggio abbey and therefore their content depends heavily on the 1136 document.



segment the real world just like *<Velach superius et inferius>* do, an assumption justified by the pleonastic use of *superiori*. I will therefore try to delineate the further semantic development of *\*Běljane* by analyzing this new usage. The two terms appear as the captions of two listings of taxes due, one listing being dedicated to inhabitants of Val Resia and one to inhabitants of Resiutta. At the end of the document, instead of *<In Rescia superiori>* another term is used, *<de Canali Rescie>* (Kos 1954: 301). In this opposition, *Uelach inferius*, now called *Risciutta* is a comonym, whereas *Uelach superius*, now called *Rescia superiora* is still a choronym, be it semantically somewhat restricted with respect to its original meaning.

However, the same term *<In Rescia superiori>* is also used within the listing dedicated to Val Resia, alongside *<Apud pratum>*, *<In Stulbiça>*, *<In Oziacho>* and *<In Nivva>*, in this order. In this context, *Uelach superius*, now called *Rescia superiora* is to be interpreted as a comonym for the village presently known as San Giorgio. The conclusion must be that *Uelach superius* is polysemous and actually expresses two meanings, 'Val Resia' and 'San Giorgio'. Apart from this, the format of the entries for the separate villages warrants closer scrutiny, as three different formats can be distinguished. The first format applies to San Giorgio and Resiutta, that starts right away with enumerating the persons liable for taxes by name: "In Rescia superiori. Mina solvit ..." and "In Risciutta Malfat solvit ....". The second one applies to Prato di Resia, where no anthroponym is given: "Apud pratum mansus solvit ...". The last is used for the other villages, that each start off with a brief summary, before naming the liable persons: "In Stulbiça sunt 3 mansi et dimidius. Moras et Colob solvunt ...", "In Oziacho sunt 6 mansi et unam quartam. Svettiz et Stoian solvunt ..." and "In Nivva sunt 2 mansi. Cuz et Doblighoy 2 oves cum agnis, ..."

This context 4, dating from around 1240, also means that we have to go back and correct our interpretation of *<duabus villis Velach>* in context 3. Around 1200 the four villages in Val Resia must already have existed, only they are not mentioned in the documents. There the toponym *<Velach superius>*, although described as a "villa", not only refers to San Giorgio, but to the other three villages as well. Put

differently, the expression <*Velach superius*> functions as a *pars pro toto*. Possibly this usage is a reminiscence of an earlier situation, in which the expression referred to Val Resia as a whole, without distinguishing separate villages. This is also suggested by the captions of the two listings and the different entry formats for the Resian villages in the 1240 urbarium. The whole set-up of the urbarium text seems to be based on two approaches, one in which only Val Resia and Resiutta are distinguished and one that distinguishes different villages within Val Resia. That would explain the polysemous usage of <*In Rescia superiori*>.

For \**Běljane* in reference to Resiutta there exist some later attestations from travelogues. In German the loan surfaces again in 1574 as *Fellach* 'Resiutta' (Stelè 1939: 309), but in 1645 the same village is being referred to as <*Weissendorff*>. When Sreznevskij (in Czech) and Vraz (in Illyrian) report on their visits to Val Resia in 1841, they use neologisms for Resiutta, *Běla* and *Běllica*, respectively. One can only guess what kind of information and reasoning made them do so.<sup>6</sup>

The oldest attestation *Fellach* 'Resiutta' presents itself as the missing place name that could justify mhg. \**Vellach* as the hydronym indicating the Fella river. However, if one assumes that the same hydronym was used for the Fella river as well as the Resia torrent, it is exactly at Resiutta, where the two watercourses have their confluence, that semantic confusion would arise from such a situation.<sup>7</sup> In order to be acceptable as the source for mhg. \**Vellach* 'Fella river', Resiutta should be proven to have enjoyed a prominent status in the early Middle Ages, making it stand out among other localities along the Fella river. Alas, no such information is available at present.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Like ger. *Weissendorf*, i.e. 'white village', *Běla* and *Běllica* are still informed by the original Alpine Slavic name for Resiutta.

<sup>7</sup> Bezljaj must have noticed this conundrum and its possible consequences for literary Slovene. In his *Slovenska vodna imena* he discusses *Fella* in the entry BELA (1: 56), whereas etymologies for *Resia* are discussed in an entry headed REZIJANKSA BELA (2: 153).

<sup>8</sup> The only early Medieval settlements in the Canal del Ferro known for special features are Moggio (a castle) and Chiusaforte (a fortified toll house).

For the demonym in 13<sup>th</sup> century written usage only *de Resia* occurs, e.g. <*magistri Wolrici de Resia*> (1242; Härtel 1985: 127) and <*cum homine de Resia*> (1274; Di Prampero 1882: 157). It cannot be decided whether these persons were actually from San Giorgio or from some other Resian village.

An urbarium from 1459 more or less repeats the situation just described. San Giorgio is now simply called <*Rexia*> and with this name it is mentioned alongside the other three settlements:

“E 4 zorny auanty se manda stari 6 de mistura in canalle de Rexia, la qualle mistura si diuide in quelli 4 ville, zoe Stubliza, Oseach, Rexia e Gniua.” (Kos 1954: 304)<sup>9</sup>

The same proper name is also used to refer to concepts relating to the whole valley, e.g. <*laqua della Rexia*> (Kos 1954: 304) for the Resia torrent and <*canalle de Rexia*> for Val Resia, and so the twofold meaning of the toponym continues to exist. However, the entry format for the four villages has changed.<sup>10</sup> They all start with the expression “Comune de ditta villa ...”, to the effect that textually all villages are treated equal.

Context 5: A fifth configuration comes into force around 1500, with fri. *San Zòrzi* = ita. *San Giorgio* for the village in question. Whereas in 1489 a document cites “Villarum Refiæ, and Gnivæ”, already in 1504 the term “Villæ S. Giorgii” appears (see the reproductions in Madotto 1982: 151, 152). From that moment on the toponym Resia is only a choronym referring to the valley as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

The pairs *Uelach superius* : *Uelach inferius* and *Rescia superia* : *Risciutta* are both built around one head each, but the derivational relationships differ. In the former, two toponyms are derived from the same head,

<sup>9</sup> “And four days before six bushels of maslin are sent to Val Resia, which maslin is divided among these four villages, i.e. Stolvizza, Oseacco, San Giorgio and Gniua”. Maslin was a blend of wheat and rye that was used as the coagulating agent in cheese production.

<sup>10</sup> Prato di Resia is not mentioned in the text and the section for Resiutta is not transcribed by Kos.

<sup>11</sup> Desinan (1977: 169) assumes that the proper name Resia was first used for the valley and for the watercourse and only later for the settlements. This is probably correct, but in the documents this usage occurs simultaneously.

*Uelach*, but in the latter one toponym serves as the head for the derivation of the other, *Resia* + *-ute* = *Resiute*, i.e. there is a hierarchical relation in the latter pair that is absent from the former. On the other hand, the presence of one head each in the pairs suggests that the underlying naming strategies are somehow dependent on each other, although it cannot be established which of the two pairs is the younger and which the older. Judging by the short time span between the last attestation of the former (1213) and the first attestation of the latter pair (1240) they probably existed side by side, the former pair in German and Slovene,<sup>12</sup> the latter in Friulian.

For fri. *Résie* = ita. *Resia*, encountered in writing from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onward, three etymological explanations exist:

## 2.2 \*<sub>R(H)</sub>ÆTIA

The toponym *R(h)ætia* has pre-Latin origins and indicated a province of the Roman Empire that covered the Central Alps and its northern periphery. Within this area by the end of the classical period especially the south-western part had become a Romance-speaking region and as such it was known in Medieval German sources (*Churwelsch*). With varying degrees of certainty this etymology has been proposed by Partenopeo 1604: 109, Kollár 1853 and Baudouin de Courtenay 1876: 315, the latter two independently of each other and of Partenopeo. As lat. *ti*, *te* followed by a vowel regularly develops into a voiceless affricate instead of a voiced sibilant, e.g. *R(h)ætia* > ita. *Rezia* [*récija*], this proposal has its phonetic problems, to which can be added the question how this etymon could have been applied to a Slavic-speaking (*windisch*) area in the Eastern Alps.

<sup>12</sup> The German forms for toponyms pertaining to Friuli often appear to be loans from Alpine Slavic, e.g. lat. \**Utine(m)* > fri. *Udine* = psl. \**Ūdīnŭ* > csl. \**Uydīnъ* > slv. \**Ujdan* = mhg. \**Widen* > *Weiden*.

### 2.3 \*RESSECA

According to Frau's proposal (1964-65: 419) fri. *Résie* = res. *Rézija* is a deverbative and has the same etymology as the one originally introduced for the Resia/Reschen mountain pass in South Tyrol:

RASEGA mlat., Brettersäge, "Sagmühle", churw. *reisgia, resgia*, in Vinstgau verdeutscht zu Resen ... Resia, Feld in Münster (Schweiz), Rösge, Antoni de la - 1604, Münster, Röschen, an dem - 1472, Dorf *Reschen* V.G. (Schneller 1893: 54)

Toponyms based on \**resseca* 'segheria' < lat. *exsecāre* 'to cut away' (cfr. Rivoira 2012: 175-176 s.v. \**resecare* 'segare' and \**ressia* 'segheria')<sup>13</sup> are, apart from Rhaeto-Romance, also well represented in Piedmont (*Ressia*) and Lombardy (*Resega, Resiga*) but in Friuli no comparable toponym is known. In fact, as an appellative \**resseca* is a Middle Latin innovation that originated in Occitan and spread to Northwestern Italy in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries: occ. *rèssio*, pied. *ressia* 'saw, sawmill' (Rivoira 2012: 176). The voiced sibilant in the Lombard toponyms *Resega, Resiga* arose by analogy: \**ressega* > \**resga* [read *rezga*, HS] > *resga* (Franceschi and Rivoira 2013: 178). Therefore neither the hydronym ven. *Ròsega* (near Monfalcone) can easily be explained on the bases of this etymology (cfr. Puntin 2003: 112) and cannot be cited as a parallel to fri. *Résie* (cfr. Dapit 2008: 135).<sup>14</sup> The geography and phonetics of \**resseca* make it an unlikely candidate for explaining the latter two toponyms.

### 2.4 \*RESIA

Desinan (1977: 167) maintains that the homophony with the name for the Resia mountain pass is purely coincidental, because for fri. *Résie* one has to look for a deverbative from lat. *resecāre* in its post-classical meaning 'to mow'. Such a deverbative would be \**resia* (cfr. Rivoira 2012: 176-177 s.v. \**resecare* (*rexiam*) 'falciare' and \**rexia*,

<sup>13</sup> And not < lat. *resecāre* 'to saw', as Frau 1978: 102 posits.

<sup>14</sup> This notwithstanding, ven. *rosegâr*, or rather, fri. *roseâ* < lat. \**rosicare* 'to gnaw' should be considered when explaining the demonym fri. *roseàn* 'Resian', that seems to be etymologically disconnected from fri. *Résie*.

\**resium* 'secondo fieno'). As appellatives modern continuations of these Middle Latin formations do exist in Friulian:

"**Riési** Grumereccio, fieno serotino e di secondo taglio; ... A Fanna il t. significa semplicemente Fieno buono dell'ultimo taglio (Madd.). Vale pure, genericamente per Guaime, erba che cresce sul prato dopo il primo taglio. Anche *Riese, riesin, ariesi*;" (Pirona et al. 1935: 875)

However, in these forms the diphthongs are in discord with the closed monophthong in *Résie* and that is likely the reason why Marcato (in Gasca Queirazza et al. 2006: 630) adds that the etymon probably arose by fusion with some other word.

Both etymologies ultimately based on lat. *secāre* have in common that they start from Middle Latin formal and semantic developments.

Notwithstanding a vestige of uncertainty still lingering on concerning the exact origin of the Romance etymon, there is agreement on the fact that as far as Resian is concerned *Rézija* is a loan, as it lacks a Slavic basis. Actually it appears to be a relatively recent loan. In Resian the closed *é* in loans from German and Romance coalesces with *é* as the reflex of slv. \**ę* in words like SG *glédət, pétak* < slv. \**ględati, \*pętak*.<sup>15</sup> For the central Slovene dialects denasalisation is being dated to the period between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Greenberg 2000: 118-119) and therefore as a loan *Rézija*, cannot be older than the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> Loans with stressed *e* that entered Resian before denasalisation occurred have *ë*, e.g. *jëru* 'priest' = mhg. *herro*. This confirms Dapit's (2008: 135) assertion that *Rézija* is not the oldest choronym in use.<sup>17</sup> Also fri. *Resiute* = ita. *Resiutta* is not particularly

<sup>15</sup> Closed *é* in Resian may also go back to tautosyllabic \**en* in loans that entered the language at the Proto-Slavic or Common Slavic stage like SG *koléda* = lat. *Calendæ*, but no Romance etymology containing \**en* has ever been proposed for *Rézija*.

<sup>16</sup> Probably it is even somewhat younger. Resian belongs to a group of Slovene dialects in the North and West of the Slovene language area in which the reflexes of non-final acute \**e*, \**ě* did not fuse with the reflexes of long-stressed and non-final acute \**ę*, e.g. res. *rěpa* 'turnip' <> Gsg *rěpa* 'tail', zilj. *rěpa* <> Gsg *rěpa* (Potschach/Potočë; Pronk 2009: 261), ter. *riěpa* <> Gsg *rě:pa* (Pradielis/Ter; Ježovnik 2019: 575) < csl. \**rěpa* <> Gsg *rěpa*. This is seen as an indication that denasalisation occurred relatively late within this area.

<sup>17</sup> At least, in spoken Resian.

old. In the classical period a customs checkpoint known as *statio Plorucensis* was located where now Resiutta is, a Latin toponym that is not continued in Friulian.

### 3 A PROPOSED CHAIN OF LINGUISTIC EVENTS

The changes in the use of proper names that have been described above all occur in writing, and in Romance idioms at that. But judging by the present-day situation also in spoken Resian some changes occurred. The hydronym *Bila* has been replaced by the expression *ta Vilika Wöda*, although the original name could still be heard when Baudouin de Courtenay researched the dialect. There are still two comonyms in use based on the etymon slv. *\*běl*, *tu-w Bili* and *ta-na Bili* for the villages of San Giorgio and Resiutta, respectively, a derivational innovation with respect to slv. *\*Běljane*, Lpl *\*Běljah*: the new comonyms are based on the Lsg of the hydronym slv. *\*Běla*. Apart from this the inhabitants of San Giorgio itself prefer saying *tu-w Šanğòrğë* over *tu-w Bili*. So at least that name change in writing is reflected in speech, be it only in one of the Resian local dialects.

In present-day Resian *\*běljane* is reflected by two lexemes. The first one is the demonym SG *bijän*, Npl *bijanavi* 'inhabitant of Resiutta'. Formally *bijän* is not completely regular, because one would have expected *\*bajän*, cfr. SG *bajäk* 'egg-white' < slv. *\*běljak*. This expected regular form can be seen in the second lexeme, the toponym SG *Bajanawö* (Dapit 2008: 21, supposing an unidentified anthroponym) < slv. *\*běljan-ov-o*, a locality situated in the Ucea valley. To Resian native speakers this microtoponym is semantically opaque, but it occurs in an area where also microtoponyms like *Bíska Kila* and *Bískä Rawninä* are located, names that refer to ownership of said localities by the former municipality of San Giorgio. So the original meaning of *Bajanawö* is *\*'belonging to an inhabitant of San Giorgio'*. Both attested lexemes show a restriction of the sense 'the people living by the *\*Běla*' originally conveyed by *\*běljane*.

Instead of the obsolete *\*bajän* 'inhabitant of San Giorgio' the regular demonym with respect to San Giorgio is now the adjective res. *te biski*, Npl *ti biski* < *\* slv. bělski* already seen in *Bíska Kila* and *Bískä Rawninä*

above. Also for the other three villages such adjectival demonyms exist, but for them, in contrast to San Giorgio, also substantives derived by means of the suffix *-an-* < csl. *\*-an(in)-* can be encountered: G *njiwjan*, *osojèn*, *subičèn*. However, these have acquired a pejorative connotation: *subičèn* is associated with ‘avarice’, for instance.

This leaves us with the Resian choronym and demonym referring to the valley as a whole. It is here that Friulian loans prevailed, with the choronym *Rézija* already discussed above and the demonym res. *rozajän* = fri. *rosean* or *te rozajanski*, Npl *ti rozajanski*. But alongside these lexemes in the neighbouring dialect of Torre also the older ones are still known, with the choronym ter. *Biéla*, Lsg *tow Biéli* ‘Val Resia’ (Flaipano/Fejplan; Spinozzi Monai 2009: 153, 154) and the demonym Npl *bejáni* (Montemaggiore/Brezje; Spinozzi Monai 2009: 229) ‘inhabitants of Val Resia’.<sup>18</sup> The innovative Lsg-based construction is here used for the Resia valley as a whole and not just for the village of San Giorgio.

I will now offer a reconstruction of the historical development of the Resian proper names discussed so far in order to link the oldest situation attested with the present-day situation. First, a schematic representation of the four main stages I propose to distinguish:

	A	B	C	D
‘Resia basin’	* <i>Běljane</i>	---	---	---
‘its inhabitants’	* <i>běljane</i>	---	---	---
‘Resia valley’	---	* <i>Běljane X</i>	* <i>ta u Běli</i>	<i>Rézija</i>
‘its inhabitants’	---	* <i>běljane X</i>	* <i>běljane X</i>	<i>rozajän/ti rozajanski</i>
‘San Giorgio’	---	* <i>Běljane X</i>	* <i>ta u Běli</i>	<i>tu-w Bili/tu-w Šangörğë</i>
‘its inhabitants’	---	* <i>běljane X</i>	* <i>běljane X</i>	<i>ti biski</i>

<sup>18</sup> In a restricted sense ter. *bejân* may also mean ‘inhabitant of Uccia’ (Monteaperta/Viškorša; Spinozzi Monai 2009: 452). Cfr. Matičetov 1993: 61, footnote 16, Merku 1997: 161 and Dapit 1998: 141 for more meanings of this lexeme and its stem-stressed accent variant, plus an alternative etymological explanation.



'Resiutta'	---	* <i>Běljane</i> Y	* <i>ta-na Běli</i>	* <i>ta-na Běli</i>
'its inhabitants'	---	* <i>běljane</i> Y	* <i>běljane</i> Y	<i>bijanavi</i>

TABLE 3: From *Běl'ane* to *tu-w Bili* and related changes

A = only basins are distinguished (1136, second quote)

B = regions/settlements within the basin are distinguished (1136, first quote; 1202-1213 advocacy dispute)

C = choronym and comonyms based on Lsg (ca. 1240 and 1459 urbarium or later)

D = Friulian loans (2022)

X, Y = diacritics to distinguish otherwise polysemous expressions

Stage A represents our point of departure, in which only larger territories and the people living there are distinguished. X and Y in stages B and C stand for unknown formal features in spoken Resian expressing the distinction made by *superius* and *inferius* in written non-Resian usage. The continued use of \**běljane* in these same stages is assumed because of the attestations ter. Npl *bejáni* 'inhabitants of Val Resia', SG *Bajanawö* '\*belonging to an inhabitant of San Giorgio' and *bijanavi* 'inhabitants of Resiutta'. The argument crucially hinges on the ambiguity that the pair \**Běljane* X : \**běljane* X probably had during the later Middle Ages (stages B and especially C). This I infer from the written use of *Resia* in the urbaria from that period. This is the latest stage where the substitution of the Lpl-based toponyms by Lsg-based toponyms should be placed. True, also elsewhere in the Slovene language area we find this kind of substitution, e.g. the comonyms <*Velah*> (1340), now Bela in the Municipality of Kamnik, and <*ober Velach*> (1387), now Zgornja Bela in the Municipality of Preddvor.<sup>19</sup> In the case of Resian, the choronym may have played a rôle in this change: the preposition res. *tu-w* is generally used for indicating a position within a valley, e.g. *S tu-w Raklònici* 'in Val Raccolana' (the valley running parallel north of Val Resia). So the choronym ter. Lsg *tow Biéli* may well formally correspond to an expression that was once

<sup>19</sup>"suphuob ... ze Velah ob der vest ze Močnik" and "ze ober Velach", quoted according to <<https://topografija.zrc-sazu.si/>>.

used in Resian as well, possibly used concurrently with the Lsg-based expression *tu-w Réziji*. Under these circumstances *\*ta u Běli* was polysemous, expressing both a comonym and a choronym. Lsg-based *ta-na Bili* for 'Resiutta' may have arisen on the model of *tu-w Bili* for 'San Giorgio':<sup>20</sup> whereas *tu-w Bili* with the preposition *w* repeats the choronym, the preposition *na* in *ta-na Bili* indicates that the village so named is located upon the Resia torrent, which San Giorgio is not. The adjective *biski* and the analogical *i* in *bijanavi* depend on the presence of these Lsg-based expressions. Stage D arose by cancelling the ambiguous use of *\*ta u Běli X* and *\*běljane X* by means of Friulian loans for the choronym and its corollary demonym. The adjective *biski* may have originated as a case of the general tendency to have adjectival demonyms derived from comonyms, cfr. the neutral demonyms res. *njivaški*, *osöjski* and *sòlbaški* as opposed to the pejorative G *njiwjan*, *osojèn* and *subičèn*, and also *laški* 'Friulian; Italian', *niški* 'German', *buški* 'Slovene', possibly all modelled on the similar Romance pattern: ita. *italiano*, *tedesco*, *sloveno* are both adjectives and substantives.<sup>21</sup>

Maybe also an extra-linguistic factor was at play here, for which see below.

<sup>20</sup> In the secondary literature some phantom forms that have not been recorded in primary sources, either written or spoken, may confuse the reader. For 'San Giorgio' one may find res. *Tam v Bieli* (Kos 1954: 299, footnote 2), *Po Bjele* (Desinan 1977: 169), *Horinja Bila* (Madotto 1985: 73), for 'Resiutta' res. *Tam na Bieli* (Kos 1954: 298, footnote 1), *Dolinja Bila* (Madotto 1985: 73), lat. *Resia Inferior* (Desinan 1977: 166), for 'inhabitants of Resiutta' *Bijäni* (Puntin 2012: 55, footnote 8) and for 'Resia' res. *Röjja* (Desinan 1977: 167). Madotto's forms, actually calques for the Medieval Latin-German toponyms with modern Resian means, have gained some following in recent written Resian as *Zgurinja Bila* and *Zdulinja Bila*, respectively (Dapit: 2008: 26). Puntin's Npl *Bijäni* is probably inspired by *bijän* 'resiuttano' (Chinese 2003: 26). The accented vowel in *Röjja* may have been graphically influenced by the first vowel in fri. *roseän*, res. *rozajän*.

<sup>21</sup> In fact, in present-day Resian the demonym *rozajanski* is much more frequent than *rozajän*.

#### 4 HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

To get a broader view of the changing semantics conveyed by the demonym *\*běljane*, some historical and socio-economic context is needed. The earliest history of Val Resia and Resiutta is largely unknown, but from what has been said before it will be clear that it makes sense to study them together. During the Roman period a maintained road existed through the Canal del Ferro, practicable on foot, on horse-back and with carriages. Connected to this road was the existence of a customs check-point, *statio Plorucensis*, located where now Resiutta is (Faleschini 2010: 180-182). During recent excavations within Val Resia, on a hilltop called *S ta-na Rado* near Stolvizza, ruins have been found that point to the presence of an observation post between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. that probably served to keep an eye on the mountain passes communicating with the Soča/Isonzo vally to the East (Quaglia and Lonardi [sine anno]).

All this pertains to the period before the arrival of the Alpine Slavs, dated for Northeastern Friuli and the upper part of the Soča basin to the period between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Štih and Peršič 1981: 337-339; Grafenauer 1987: 5-8), or, limiting ourselves to the Canal del Ferro and its lateral valleys, until the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Kos 1932: 126). At least around the year 1000 Val Resia must have had an Alpine Slavic population (Kos 1932: 128). The change in ethnic composition this entailed in Northeastern Friuli is shown by the many toponyms with a Slavic etymological pedigree in the Canal del Ferro and its eastern lateral valleys, starting from the North Val Dogna, Val Raccolana and Val Resia (Baudouin de Courtenay 1876: 227-228; Kos 1919: 7). Some examples from the hydrographical left bank, i.e. east of the Fella river: (near Pietratagliata) Rio Geloviz = slv. *\*jelovac*; (Val Dogna) Plechize = slv. Npl *\*plečica*; (Val Raccolana) Monte Iamma = slv. *\*jama*. True, along the right bank, i.e. west of the Fella river such toponyms are distributed over a narrow strip, but certainly not absent: (Dogna) Visocco = slv. *\*visoko*; (Chiusaforte) Stavoli Patòc = slv. *\*potok*, Plananize = slv. Npl *\*planinice*, Raunis = slv. Npl *\*ravni*; (between Villanova and Ovedasso) Belepeit = slv. *\*běli peč*, Rauni, Sterpeit = slv. *\*strma peč*. This ethnical change must have been rather radical in the Canal del Ferro, because for the

principal settlements there hardly any toponyms from the Roman period have survived. In the urbarium dating from ca. 1240 not only in Val Resia, but also in Resiutta Slavic anthroponyms are recorded: <Gorianin>, <Stanigoyich>, <Zernuocha> (Kos 1954: 298-299).

It is only from the year 1000 on that we have some concrete information at our disposal about activities along the previously Roman road. This activity picked up because of iron transports originating from mines in Carinthia and Styria (Faleschini 2012: 49) and the ongoing marginalisation of Constantinople in favour of Venice, as a consequence of which imports of Oriental goods destined for Central Europe were transported along this road, instead of going up the Danube (Reutter 1909: 213-215). In Val Canale mining also started and pre-industrial activities like foundries were mainly in Venetian hands (Gstirner 1900: 417-418; Steinicke 1984: 27-28). Even in the Canal del Ferro itself mining and founding activity is mentioned (limonite) during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but this was abandoned soon thereafter (Conti 2012: 187; Faleschini 2012: 85). For the local history of the area the dedication of the abbey at Moggio in 1119 was of utmost importance, as it constituted the authority in matters spiritual and worldly for the whole Fella basin up to Pontebba, where the Val Canale starts. Road maintenance, officially a task of the abbey, was delegated to the Di Prampero family of Gemona (Faleschini 2013: 85-86). In 1420 the Patria del Friuli succumbed to the Republic of Venice which brought the trade route through the Canal del Ferro under direct Venetian rule.

The economic development and settlement of Val Dogna and Val Raccolana was more troublesome and slower with respect to what happened in Val Resia (Gstirner 1906: 367-369), that as witnessed by the 1136 document already had undergone some development. Because of natural circumstances in the two northernmost valleys settlements generally developed later and remained much smaller when compared to Val Resia.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the general depopulation of the Alpine region has progressed much further

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<sup>22</sup> Per December 31, 1871, in Val Resia 2537 actually present inhabitants were counted. This compares to an estimated 400 actually present inhabitants in Val Dogna and 550 in Val Raccolana (Baudouin de Courtenay 1876: 227).

in those two valleys than in Val Resia. The main settlements were and are situated at the start of the valleys, in the Canal del Ferro (Baudouin de Courtenay 1876: 227), and are named accordingly Dogna (zilj. *Dunja*, res. *Dünja*) and Raccolana. Val Resia deviates from this naming strategy, because the settlement at the start of the valley presently does not go by the same name as the valley itself.

This general pattern offers a possibility to answer the question from which direction Val Resia was settled by Alpine Slavs, from the West or from the East. Assuming a parallel with respect to the other two valleys, development activity and later permanent settlement of Val Resia probably originated from Resiutta. The arrival of Alpine Slavs there had been by way of the Roman road, the preferred infrastructure of early Medieval armies and migration currents.<sup>23</sup> The early common dialectal development of *rezijansko* and *ziljsko* (Ramovš 1928: 110-111; Ramovš 1945) is to be seen as the consequence of the relative ease of communication made possible by the Roman road between Alpine Slavs that settled in the Canal del Ferro and its adjacent valleys, Val Resia included, and their counterparts further north.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that in the earliest known documents pertaining to Val Resia Resiutta and San Giorgio are mentioned together, while no mention is made of possibly other existing settlements, shows that in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the economic barycenter of the area was located around those two settlements. They appear in these sources as a single economic unit that probably covered the whole Resia basin. And they appear under a common name. The economic separation that ensued must already have been in place in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, as the 1240 urbarium shows. There the concluding remark on the taxes due from the lower Fella basin states:

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<sup>23</sup> The recently excavated observation post near Stolvizza does not invalidate this argument. The mountain passes from the Soča valley were surely a military risk to be taken seriously, but were less favourable to migrations.

<sup>24</sup> Those common dialectal traits developed only after migration turned into settlement, so they should not be construed as evidence for the existence of a single migratory wave recognizable by common dialectal traits, cfr. Holzer 1995; 1996.

“Summa super omnia de Mocio, Ovedas, Rescivta et de Canali Rescie ...” (Kos 1954: 301)

As San Giorgio is the only Resian settlement that is mentioned in those documents, it must have had an outstanding position within Val Resia. That was probably motivated by its economic importance: in said urbarium the number of farmsteads in San Giorgio (12 plus two halves plus one double = 15) is larger than the number of farmsteads in the other Resian settlements taken together (12 plus three quarters = 12.75) (Kos 1954: 290). Comparing this to the 1459 urbarium one must conclude that the relative economic importance of San Giorgio had diminished during the intervening two centuries, with only six farmsteads against Oseacco alone already seven (Kos 1954: 303-304). Taken together these data again suggest that the development of Val Resia progressed from West to East along the valley, as was already maintained above in the comparison with Val Dogna and Val Raccolana. In fact the most recent settlements, the nowadays again abandoned hamlets of Coritis and Ucea, are to be found in the extreme eastern part of the area. For a better understanding: economic activity in Medieval Val Resia was based on sheep, with the main surplus articles cheese, wool and livestock being produced during the herding season. Once this herding activity becomes accompanied by subsistence crop farming *in situ*, settlement may occur in the form of permanent isolated dwellings, some of which may grow into compact nucleated villages in order to preserve as much arable land as possible. Taking into account this general pattern found throughout the Alps, the settling of Val Resia is best envisaged as a drawn-out process, set in motion by shepherds stemming from Resiutta.<sup>25</sup>

The ecclesiastical history of Resiutta and Val Resia shows a similar West-East movement. Initially people living within Val Resia were dependent on the church of St. Martin Bishop in Resiutta for important sacraments like baptism and burial (Conti 2016; Quaglia 2016: 65). That church was

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<sup>25</sup> To the North of Val Resia several toponyms containing *fri. ciout* 'stable' can be found, e.g. (Val Dogna) Chiout di Pupe, Chiout di Gus; (Val Raccolana) Chiout Cali. This is a reminiscence of the same process, whereby temporary dwellings turned into permanent ones and subsequently into hamlets or villages.

granted permission to install a baptismal font in 1199, but that may well have been just a confirmation of a right already granted in the past (Conti 2016). From a report on a pastoral visitation to Val Resia that took place in 1602 one can learn that the church at San Giorgio, at that point a branch church of the parish church of St Mary of the Assumption at Prato, had a baptismal font and a cemetery (Quaglia 2016: 39). The other branch churches in Val Resia at Gniva (the only other branch church in existence at the time of the 1602 visitation), Oseacco and Stolvizza either never or only much later had their own cemetery. The church at San Giorgio must have enjoyed a special position in the past, before the parish was organized around St Mary of the Assumption: it is highly unlikely that San Giorgio, at a close distance with no intervening obstacles from Prato, would have been granted the right of baptism and burial only after St Mary of the Assumption became the parish church. It is also reported that St. George once must have been the patron saint of the whole of Val Resia (Sreznevskij 1841: 342; Madotto 1982: 119).<sup>26</sup> I assume that the church at San Giorgio originated as a branch church of St. Martin Bishop at Resiutta and for a certain period functioned as the point of religious reference for all inhabitants of Val Resia. However, eventually the parish was located at Prato, which I again interpret as a sign of the subsequent dwindling importance of the village of San Giorgio.

The economic and ecclesiastical Medieval history of Val Resia is reflected in the way the villages are treated in the two *urbaria* (the different entry formats) and how San Giorgio and Val Resia are called. In the first period after the separation of the Resia basin into two units, “superius” and “inferius”, San Giorgio was the economic, ecclesiastical and probably also demographic barycenter of Val Resia. In this situation the polysemy that follows from using a single etymon as the choronym for Val Resia and as the comonym for San Giorgio is a natural linguistic consequence of this state of affairs. Later on the remaining villages gained in weight with respect to San Giorgio and all villages became equal partners, none of which could easily be equated with the valley as a whole. The

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<sup>26</sup> The only Resian hagionym going back to the period of the Christianization of the Slavs is in fact *Šint Jürin* ‘St. George’. Other hagionyms are more recent loans from Romance.

polysemy had to be resolved. In Romance context this was done by introducing the comonym fri. *San Zòrz* and preserving the choronym fri. *Résie*, in spoken Resian by restricting *tu-w Bili* to a comonym and adopting the choronym *Rézija*. As the adapting strategies differed, so the time frames may have been different in both language contexts.

As to the demonyms, *\*běljane X* 'inhabitants of Val Resia' was shunned in favour of fri. *roseàn* = res. Npl *te rozajanski*, likely a parallel to the adoption of the loan *Rézija*. It is more difficult to explain why it was also dropped in the meaning 'inhabitants of San Giorgio', whereas *\*běljane Y* 'inhabitants of Resiutta' survived. Although difficult to demonstrate beyond doubt, I would still like to offer a hypothesis, building on the local rivalry (*campanilismo*, i.e. parochialism) between the four villages, that eventually all had become municipalities in their own right. In a desire to express their local identity, the inhabitants of the other villages shunned *\*běljane X* in the meaning of 'inhabitants of Val Resia' because of its association with San Giorgio, perceived as disturbing. Driven by this same desire, the inhabitants of San Giorgio shunned *\*běljane X* in the meaning of 'inhabitants of San Giorgio' because of its association with the valley as a whole. That association was perceived as a negative factor in the search for a clear expression of the village identity. Looking at it this way, the loans *Rézija* and Npl *te rozajanski* and the derivational calque Npl *te biski* did serve a purpose. As to local individualism as an extra-linguistic driving force behind this change, it should be kept in mind that the very existence of four strongly differing local dialects is also partly bound up with this phenomenon, cfr. also Steenwijk 1999: 35-37. As a result, the etymon *\*běljane X* disappeared in both meanings whereas *\*běljane Y > bijanavi* 'inhabitants of Resiutta' was preserved, as Resiutta was no party to the inner-Resian local rivalry.

Meanwhile in the Canal del Ferro the Slovene ethnic element was being gradually assimilated to an environment that became more and more Romance. Already in 1240 the number of Slavic anthroponyms mentioned for Resiutta is lower than that for Val Resia. In that same period also in Val Resia German and Friulian anthroponyms are recorded, a fact that is not to be linked with the ethnic composition of the valley's population but rather with its acceptance of German



and Friulian cultural elements (Härtel 1996: 207). The mining and especially transport activity during the late Middle Ages must have increased the Romance component of the population of the Canal del Ferro<sup>27</sup> and ultimately favoured the establishment of a regional lingua franca (*Verkehrssprache*). In fact, in Friulian dialectology the dialect of the Canal del Ferro is analyzed as a mixture of Carnian and Central Friulian elements (Francescato 1966).

In Val Raccolana and Val Dogna the population was not as numerous as in Val Resia, because of the relatively unfavourable natural conditions there. As a consequence the former two valleys continued to have their demographic barycenter in the Canal del Ferro. For these reasons in the two northernmost valleys assimilation to Romance progressed much more rapidly. In the end a Romance-speaking area evolved between Val Resia and Slovene-speaking areas in the North-West, notably in Val Canale, and linguistic innovations could not spread anymore uninterruptedly from there all the way to Val Resia.<sup>28</sup>

## 5 CONCLUSION

The available evidence shows that Val Resia was settled by Alpine Slavic shepherds and their families originating from present-day Resiutta. This was most likely a drawn-out process. San Giorgio was, if not the first, certainly among the first permanent settlements there and initially occupied a preponderant position among the Resian villages, only to lose that position by the end of the Middle Ages. Its original name was csl. *\*Běl'ane*, which would have resulted in a non-attested *\*\*Bajaně* in modern Resian. Its present Resian name, *tu-w Bili*, is probably identical with the way Val Resia was called before the loan *Rézija* gained a foothold. The demonym for the inhabitants of Val Resia, now also a Friulian loan, was originally csl. *\*běl'ane* 'the people living by the *\*Běl'a*', where *\*Běl'a* indicated the Resia torrent along its entire course. This

<sup>27</sup> See also Danelutto et al. 2004: 16-18 on this increase.

<sup>28</sup> I believe that the economic and demographic changes described here have been more important for the interruption of contact between *rezijansko* and *ziljsko* than the political change brought about by the 1420 annexation of the Patria del Friuli by the Republic of Venice that is often mentioned in this context.

demonym csl. *\*běl'ane* may have developed into the forms res. *\*bajani* or *\*bajanovi* before it also disappeared from usage. However, the etymon survives until this day as res. *bijanavi* 'inhabitants of Resiutta' and the microtoponym res. *Bajanawö*.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

csl. = Common Slavic (also covers the notion "Alpine Slavic")

fri. = Friulian

G = local Resian dialect of Gniva

ger. = German

grm. = Germanic

ita. = Italian

lat. = Latin

mhg. = Middle High German

O = local Resian dialect of Oseacco

occ. = Occitan

ohg. = Old High German

pied. = Piedmontese

psl. = Proto-Slavic

res. = Resian dialect

S = local Resian dialect of Stolvizza

SG = local Resian dialect of San Giorgio

slv. = Common Slovene (in the historical sense)

ter. = *tersko* dialect

ven. = Venetian

zilj. = *ziljsko* dialect

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#### SUMMARY

ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF VAL RESIA AND SOME OF ITS TOPONYMS OR: HOW THE RESIANS LOST THEIR NAME

On the basis of the available circumstantial evidence one can reasonably assume that Val Resia was settled by Alpine Slavic shepherds and their families originating from present-day Resiutta, at the time also having an Alpine Slavic population. This was most likely a drawn-out process with several intermediate stages. San Giorgio was, if not the first, certainly among the first permanent settlements there and initially occupied a preponderant position among the Resian villages, only to lose that position by the end of the Middle Ages. Its original name was csl. *\*Běl'ane*, which would have resulted in a non-attested *\*\*Bajaně* in modern Resian. Its present Resian name, *tu-w Bili*, is probably identical with the way Val Resia was called before the loan *Rézija* gained a foothold. The demonym for the inhabitants of Val Resia, now also a Friulian loan, was originally csl. *\*běl'ane* 'the people living by the *\*Běla'*, where *\*Běla* indicated the Resia torrent along its entire

course. This demonym csl. *\*běl'ane* may have developed into forms like res. *\*bajani* or *\*bajanovi* before it also disappeared from usage. However, the etymon survives until this day as res. *bijanavi* 'inhabitants of Resiutta' and the microtoponym res. *Bajanawö*.

#### O ZGODNJI ZGODOVINI REZIJANSKE DOLINE IN NEKATERIH NJENIH TOPONIMIH, ALI: KAKO SO REZIJANCI IZGUBILI SVOJE IME

Na podlagi obstoječih posrednih dokazov lahko sklepamo, da so se v dolino Rezija najprej naselili alpskoslovanski pastirji ter njihove družine iz današnje vasi Resiutta, kjer so v tistem obdobju prav tako živeli alpski Slovani. Po vsej verjetnosti je to bil dolgotrajen proces z nekaj vmesnimi stopnjami. Vas San Giorgio je bila gotovo med prvimi, če ne ravno prva, stalna naselbina in je v začetku imela pomembno vlogo med njimi, ki jo je nekako izgubila do približno konca srednjega veka. Njeno izvorno ime je bilo sla. *\*Běl'ane*, kar bi se pa v sodobni rezijanščini razvijalo v nedokazano *\*\*Bajanë*. *Tu-w Bili*, njeno ime v današnji rezijanščini, po vsej verjetnosti odgovarja imenu, s katerim so imenovali celotno dolino, dokler ga ni nadomestila izposojenka *Rézija*. Demonim za prebivalce doline Rezije, zdaj tudi furlanska izposojenka, je bil izvorno sla. *\*běl'ane*, kar je označeval 'ljudi, ki živijo ob potoku *\*Běla*', od njegovega izvira do izliva pri vasi Resiutta. Demonim sla. *\*běl'ane* se je verjetno razvil v obliki kot sta rez. *\*bajani* ali *\*bajanovi*, preden je izginil iz rabe. Vendar pa se je ta etimon ohranil vse do danes kot rez. *bijanavi* 'prebivalci vasi Resiutta' in kot mikrotoponim *Bajanawö*.