

# The Romance Balkans



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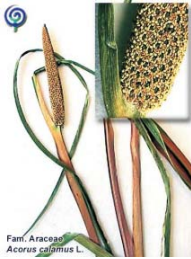




mentations) Latin (Romance) ancestry as well as for further recognition of Romance elements (whether (in)conspicuous calques or other 'linguistic copies' such as loanwords) in the domain of the Serbo-Croatian folk botanical nomenclature.

**Key words:** etymology, loanwords, botanical nomenclature

### 1.0. Botanical identification and description of Calamus



*Calamus* or *Common Sweet Flag* is a perennial, rhizomatous, iris-like herb, which belongs to the plant genus of the family Araceae, order Arales, subclass Arecidae. It has erect, sharp-pointed, sword-shaped leaves that fan-out from a pinkish base and grows to 5 feet in length. The leaves produce a sweet, tangerine-like scent when bruised. A flower stem or scape arises from the base of the outer leaves. A spathe extends beyond the scape. A single, cylindrical spike, or spadex, angles upward at this union. During the summer months (from May to July), the spadex is crowded with small yellowish-green to brown flowers. A thick subterranean stem, known as the rhizome, enables the propagation of sweet flag by producing shoots and root systems that develop into new individuals. The rhizomes, roots and leaves yield a light brown to brownish yellow volatile oil known as Calamus oil. The plant flourishes in low, wet, swampy places, and along ditches. It is found across Europe, in southern Russia, northern Asia Minor, southern Siberia, China, Japan, Burma, India, Sri Lanka, and northern USA.<sup>1</sup>



### 2.0. Historical and ethnographical data on distribution, cultivation and medicinal use of Calamus

The history of medicinal use of Calamus is not very well documented. The plant is probably indigenous to southeastern Asia where its rhizome has been used as a spice for centuries. It appears that Calamus has been introduced into Europe by Tatars in 13<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest record of its cultivation in European gardens seems to be that of the famous Austrian botanist Clusius in 1574, who was the first to cultivate it at Vienna, from a root obtained from Constantinople. Clusius distributed it to other botanists in Belgium, Germany and France. It is not recorded as abundant in Germany until 1588. In England, it was probably introduced

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information see the website: <http://plants.usda.gov/>.

about 1596, being first grown by Gerard, who looked upon it as an Eastern plant. Finding application mostly as an aphrodisiac, elixir and stimulant, and in magic rituals, it was very popular plant in Europe from the middle ages, right through today. Its presence in North America before European settlement is uncertain, but its use as a stimulant and hallucinogen since then has been well documented (A Modern Herbal by M. Grieve [e-version]<sup>2</sup>; Marzell 1: 110; Vajs 2003: 318). In modern herbal medicine, the plant is used in treating stomach cramps, gas, gastric ulcers, and lack of appetite. In excessive doses, it is known to induce strong visual hallucinations. The intoxicating properties may be due to its active ingredients as  $\alpha$ -asarone and  $\beta$ -asarone, but the chemistry and pharmacology of the plant are still poorly investigated and not yet fully understood.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.0. The earliest records of *Calamus* found in classical Greek and Roman medical and botanical documents and medieval nomenclatures

Botanical terms used by classical writers as well as the Pre-Linnaean Latin names in medieval nomenclatures were thoroughly analyzed and identified according to the Linnaean systematic (works by Strömberg, André, Carnoy, Marzell, see bibliographical references below). Nevertheless, in some cases, determining which particular plants the phytonymic references to apply to is still a great problem. André (1956: 16–17) assumed that the generic name *acorum* (/ -us), i n. (/ m.), borrowed from Old Greek ἄκρορον<sup>4</sup> was used by classical writers to designate three different plant species, but never the one that appears in Linnaeus' nomenclatural system under the name *Acorus calamus*: a) *Iris pseudacorus* (Celsus, *De re medicina* 5, 23, 1 B, etc., Plinius, HN 25, 157; 26, 28, Dsc. *De materia medica* 1, 2, Ps. *Apul.*, *Herbarius* 6, 11), b) *Ruscus aculeatus* (Plinius, HN 15, 27, Dsc. *De materia medica* 4, 144) and its rhizome (Plinius, HN 25, 158), c) *Anagallis arevensis* (Plinius HN 1, 25, 92; 25, 144, Dsc., *De materia medica* 2, 178) (cf. also Carnoy 1959: 7). On the other hand, according to the same scholar (André op. cit.: 65; cf. Carnoy op. cit.: 59–60), the specific name *calamus*, -i m. (the Latin reflex of the Greek prototype κάλαμος<sup>5</sup>) that had a function of a hyperonym resp. generic

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.botanical.com/>.

<sup>3</sup> To find out more on this subject search referent articles on Wiley InterScience.

<sup>4</sup> For the etymology of the word ἄκρορον see IED-project on the website: <http://www.indo-european.nl/ied/index2.html>.

<sup>5</sup> See the previous refernece.

name, was used to denote Calamus plant if appeared in syntagmatic form with the determinative adjectives *aromaticus* / *odoratus* (resp. ἀρωματικός / εὐώδης). In the Pre-Linnaean nomenclatures, the plant *Acorus calamus* is mentioned under the names *calamus* (*aromaticus*), *canna persidis*, *ciparus* Fischer, Pflkde 257, *acoreus verus*, *acorus legitimus* Bauhin, Pinax 34 (Marzell 1: 110). S.-Cr. *kalmus* (from 18th-century, Š.) and *kulmiš* (Zagreb, Š.) are of Latin descent. On the latter one Vinja (JE 2: 113) records: “Očito je da ... Šulekov fitonim ... nastavlja lat. calamus”. S.-Cr. *kulmiš* Skok (2: 231) equalizes with (Slov.) *kolmeš* also attested in Šulek’s dictionary. Šulek took the phytonym *kolmeš* over the famous Freyer’s manuscript well known by its great significance for the Slovenian folk botanical terminology (cf. Karlin 5). There is no mention of this name in Bezljaj’s or Snoj’s dictionary. However, both of the scholars give the reference on Slov. *kolmež*. According to Bezljaj (2: 58) it is borrowed from Vulgar Latin *calmus* via Germ. *Kalmus* (older *Kalmes*). Snoj (248) derives it from Austr. Germ. *kōlmās*. As for S.-Cr. *kalmus* Šulek refers to Germ. *Kalmus*.

#### 4.0. S.-Cr. *vodeni čemin*, ~ *kmin*, *žuti ljiljan*, *mantumin*, *manturin cvit* and *balad* as Latin continuants [?] designating Calamus plant in Serbo-Croatian language

##### 4.1. S.-Cr. *vodeni čemin*, ~ *kmin* and *žuti ljiljan*

According to Skok (1: 266; cf. also Vajs 2003: 319) S.-Cr. *čemin* and *kmin* are two different reflexes of the same Latin phytonym — *cumīnum*. Lat. *cumīnum* (*cym-* / *cim-* / *com-*) (n.) was used by classical writers to designate a low-growing annual herb of the carrot family — *Cuminum cyminum*. The word was borrowed from Greek κύμινον (τό). Its further origin may be Semitic, cf. Old Hebrew *kammon* [כַּמּוֹן], Egyptian *kamnini*, Akkadian *kamūnu* (André 1956: 108–109; Carnoy 1959: 100; Marzell 1: 857). In the pre-Linnaean botanical books, *Cuminum cyminum* was denoted as *cuminum sativum*, *c. officinarum*, *c. romanum*, *c. aethiopicum*, *c. carnabadium* Bauhin, Pinax 146 (Marzell 1: 1266). The plant is well known all over the world mostly by its aromatic seeds being extensively used for flavoring various foods. It is widely cultivated in the Mediterranean region of Europe and in India. Cumin is frequently confused with caraway (*Carum carvi* L.), which it resembles in appearance though not in taste (cf. homonymous designations for these two plants that appear in most of the European folk botanical nomenclatures, Marzell 1: 856–862, 1266–1268). The word entered Serbo-Croatian via Italian, Greek and German.

With the determinative adjective *vodeni*, S.-Cr. *čemin* and *kmin* denote Calamus plant: *vodeni čemin* (Lambl, Š.), ~ *kmin* (attested in famous herbariums from 18-th century found in Dubrovnik, Š.)<sup>6</sup>. Without the determinative adjective *vodeni* — *kmin* designates the following plant species: *kmin* gladiolus, liliūm coeleste, iris (18-th century's Dubrovnik herbariums), Carum carvi (Š.). Identical or similar transfer of naming unit:

Cuminum cyminum resp. Carum carvi → Acorus calamus ↔ gladiolus, liliūm coeleste, iris ← Cuminum cyminum resp. Carum carvi

is not found either in Latin (resp. Italian) or in Greek (and German).<sup>7</sup> Only two causes could provide logical sense for such occurrence in Serbo-Croatian:

- a. the (same) usage of the referred plants as a flavoring agents (in the case of the transfer direction Cuminum cyminum resp. Carum carvi → Acorus calamus), or
- b. the phonetic level-crossing of \**cuminum*<sup>8</sup> and S.-Cr. *mač* “sword” (in the case of the transfer direction Cuminum cyminum resp. Carum carvi → gladiolus, liliūm coeleste, iris): *kimin* Carum carvi, (with syncopa in protonic probably via *b* > *∅*, Skok l. c.) *kmin* Carum carvi, *čmin* [?] (Mikalja, *divlji, vodeni* ~ gladiolus, liliūm coeleste, iris), (with metathesis [?], Skok l. c.) *mčin*<sup>9</sup> [?] acorus.

As for the transfer pattern Acorus calamus ↔ bulbous plants (gladiolus, liliūm coeleste, iris), it appears in the most of the European folk botanical nomenclatures as a result of morphological similarities between the referred plants (cf. Marzell 1: 112–113); the iconymic structure of S.-Cr. compound phytonym *žuti ljiljan* (Š.) (< Lat. *lilium* > S.-Cr. *lilj*, (with ending *-an* by *bršljan* and assimilation *l* — *lj* > *lj* — *lj*) *ljiljan*, Skok 2: 303) that denotes Calamus plant is explained exactly on that base. The use of S.-Cr. *čemin* also approve this pattern: with adjective *vodeni* it designate Calamus plant, but as a generic name it comes in Tanzlingher's *Vocabolario Italiano-Ilirico* in the meaning hyacinthus and

<sup>6</sup> In the same herbariums it also comes to denote the plant *Iris pseudacorus*.

<sup>7</sup> According to the relevant phytonymical sources available to us in this moment, there is no occurrence of the similar concept in (Balkan-)Slavic or other European languages.

<sup>8</sup> \* = Romance continuant or loanword from different sources.

<sup>9</sup> The name has disputable etymology: it could be related to *mač(k)in* adj. poss. (“of a cat”), but on the other hand, the connection with *mač* “sword” (< *мъчь*, gen. *мъча* → *mča*), on account of a lancet shape of calamus, iris and gladiolus leaves, cannot be excluded (Vajs 2003: 319; cf. Skok 1: 266). The same conceptualization — “sword”, has the names for iris in other languages: Lat. *gladiola* (< *gladius*), Germ. *Schwertel*, Ital. *spade*, *spadella*, *spadoni*, Slov. *mečika* (Marzell 2: 1022).

in Jurin's *Calepinus trium linguarum* in the meaning leucanthemum [= Hemerocallis, Lilium croceum] (Vajs 2003: 359, 363).<sup>10</sup>

The reconstructed onomasiological procedures seem complicated enough to endanger validity of the hypothesis of Latin origin of the phytonyms (*vodeni*) *čemin*, (*vodeni*) *kmin* meaning Calamus plant. On the other hand, the sound and formal structure both of the names steer our reflection around to the possibility of their idioglottic origin. The form *čemin* refers to the stem *čem-* (for the suffix *-in* see Sławski 1974: 120) that appears in S.-Cr. *očemunjati* "to peel, to husk" cited by Skok (2: 130–131) s. v. *kom*<sup>1</sup>. Skok is of the opinion that *ko-* > *če-* should be considered as a result of the phonetic level-crossing with S.-Cr. *čehnuti* (cf. *česmin* [?]) rather than as apophony like in the case of Lit. *kėmuras* "bunch, cluster". As for denominative motive which the name was constructed out of, it could be found in characteristic appearance of the *fruit* of the plant *Acorus calamus* that conspicuously looks like husked corn (cf. S.-Cr. *komuš* Sablj. Goljak (Š.) and Slov. *komuš* unless we accept Skok's and Bezljaj's interpretation of these names as the continuants of Lat. *calamus* (Skok 2: 18; Bezljaj 2: 58)).

#### 4.2. S.-Cr. *mantumin*, *manturin cvit*

The name *mantumin* was recorded by two Croatian lexicographers Micaglia and Vitezović (Vajs 2003: 319). In Micaglia's *Blago jezika slovenskoga* as well as in Vitezović's *Lexicon* it appears only as the designation of the plant *Iris pseudacorus*. Phonetically the closest form to this one is S.-Cr. *mantumjen* that appears in Micaglia's and Stulli's dictionaries as the name for the plant species *Hyoscyamus albus* (Skok 2: 380). Another attestation of *mantumjen* comes from Nikolajević's word collection from Dalmacija and Hercegovina quoted by PCA, where it is defined as "a kind of grass growing in water". Although being without precise botanical identification, there is no doubt that it cannot refer to the plant *Hyoscyamus albus* that rather prefers dry soil. In the same entry PCA records about the forms *mantumen*, *mantumenat* comparing them with *mantim(j)enat* *Hyoscyamus albus* (spoken in Dubrovnik) and *manturin* *Acorus acalamus* (quoted from Popović's dictionary). Skok and Vinja also refer to *mantimjenat* *Hyoscyamus albus* (Skok 1. c.; Vinja JE 2: 170) along with *mantimient* (Vinja, 1. c.). The compound *manturin cvit* meaning *Acorus calamus* appears only once in an old Dalmatian herbal manuscript (Š.).

<sup>10</sup> The same name also appears in Tanzlingher's and Della Bella's dictionary s. v. *gelsomino*. According to Skok (1: 759) S.-Cr. *jasamin*, *jelšamin*, *jelžemin*, *đelsamin* and *česmin* [sic!] are reflexes of Ital. *gelsomino* *Jasminum sambac* (< Turk. *zambac* "lily") that continues Lat. *jasminum* (cf. Vajs 2003: 363).

Budmani was the first who assumed a foreign origin of the phytonym *mantimjenat* and conferred it with S.-Cr. *mantranje*, *mantilo* (RJA 6: 446). Skok (l. c.) brings it in connection with *martir* and describes it as substantivum abstractum on Lat. *-mentum* besides *-men*, gen. *-minis* (*\*martyrimentum* > *mantimjenat*). Vinja (l. c.) is of the opinion that Skok's explanation is acceptable only in order to interpret the secondary motivation of the word (as pareymological leaning on *mantilo*, *mantranje*). According to Vinja, it would be easier to explain sound structure of *mantimjenat* by setting out Latin *adamantis* (> Ital. *adamantida* "specie di erba nota nell'antichità" < gr. ἄδαμας, -αντος) as the designation for *Hyoscyamus albus*. Finally, he concludes that S.-Cr. *patimjenat*, being synonymous to *mantimjenat*, approves such interpretation of the name. Both of the mentioned scholars agree in assuming for *mantimjenat* Latin provenance but proposing different prototype. S.-Cr. *mantimjenat*, *mantumjen*, *manturin cvit* Skok (l. c.) considered as the reflexes of the same Latin ancestor not explaining their different formal or semantic realizations. On the other hand, Vinja (l. c.) makes no record of S.-Cr. *manturin cvit*. In other words, he ignores the possibility of deriving *mantimjenat*, *mantumjen*, *manturin cvit* from the common original. Lacking of the equivalent pattern of the designations transfer *Hyoscyamus albus* ↔ *Acorus calamus* ↔ *Iris pseudacorus* in other European folk botanical nomenclatures as well as of the capable reason for the appearance of such different realia to which the same phytonymic reference is assigned to<sup>11</sup> induced us to analyze the phytonyms *mantumin* *Iris pseudacorus* and *manturin cvit* *Acorus calamus* separately from those that denote the plant *Hyoscyamus albus* (not excluding the possibility of their crossing).

Putting aside re-analysis of the supposed etymology of the cited designations for the plant *Hyoscyamus albus*, we keep thinking about following solutions regarding the origin of the names *mantumin* *Iris pseudacorus* and *manturin cvit* *Acorus calamus*:

- a. assuming Ger. *Mattumich*<sup>12</sup> *Carum carvi* for being the prototype of *mantumin* and *manturin cvit* is acceptable from the aspect of morphonology, but rather questionable from the aspect of onomasiology (see § 4.1);

<sup>11</sup> There is one feature common for both of these plants — ability to induce hallucination, but the semantic bound PLANT (SPECIES) ~ ANOTHER PLANT (SPECIES) based on general perception (the origin of the plant, the time of blossoming, growth, etc. and its efficiency for human beings: edibility, inedibility, medicinal properties, toxicity, etc.) is of very rare type.

<sup>12</sup> Ger. *Mattumich* is the compound word whose second part is traced back to Latin *cuminum* (Marzell 1: 856–861).



b. there are two plants of swamp species that are similar to *Calamus* by appearance of (overground) shoot *id est* the shape of flowers cluster: *Typha* and *Scirpus* (cf. synonymous designations S.-Cr. *loč Typha*, *T. latifolia*, Slov. *loč, ločje T. latifolia, sivi / široki loček Acorus calamus*; S.-Cr. *šaša Acorus calamus, Typha, T. latifolia, šašika Scirpus radicans*) (see also § 5.0). Both of the plants have the names probably derived from S.-Cr. *bat* < psl. \**bъtъ*, cf. Slov. *bet* “stem of mushroom; corncob”, Russ. *бom* “stem and leaves of bulbous plants; an onion” (EPCJ 2: 254–255; for the word formation cf. Sławski 1974: 26): *baturak, baturica Typha latifolia, botur Typha, T. latifolia (Симоновић), Scirpus palustris (Š.)* (cf. S.-Cr. appellatives *batur* “kočanj, okomak kukuruza”, *baturak* “manja cvast u obliku klipa; kočanj” (PCA), *baturka* “stabljika kukuruza” Leskovac (Митровић)) (see also ЭССЯ 1: 140 s. v. *bътаръ II, bътуръ, bътурь*). The onomasiological impulse for their denominations comes from the cluster of flowers in the shape of corncob. It is easy to find the same onomasiological motivation in the phytonym *manturin cvit* (see § 4.1, 5.0), but could it be also derived from the same word stem (with different phonetic realization and similar formal structure)? Such interpretation would approve once again the fact that for the words from this lexical segment is not only typical complex bonds with realia they refer to but also relatively high phonetical variability so as their primary form is usually misty.

### 5.0. S.-Cr. *balad*

S.-Cr. *balad* “calamo aromatico, calamo odorato” was recorded in 18th-century in the botanical lexicon of Dubrovnik physicians P. Aquilla and K. Buć and in Pizzelli’s herbariums (Š.). Skok (1: 98) s. v. *balad* cites S.-Cr. *babad* (Kuzmić, Š.) and *baban* (Kuzmić, Anselmo da Canali, Š.) — the names synonymous to *balad* (both of them without an accent and definite areal distribution), with no idea for revealing their mutual relation, finds the whole matter to be ‘unripe’ for the etymological analysis and considers comparison with S.-Cr. *palud, babad* and *iđirot* by Daničić unnecessary. Eventual derivation from S.-Cr. *baba* “an old woman; grandmother” is pointed out in EPCJ (2: 27). However, Daničić’s opinion should not be rejected too. S.-Cr. *palud divji* was first recorded in the famous Venetian Codex *Liber de simplicibus Benedicti Rinii, medici et philosophi Veneti* (cod. Marc. Lat. VI, 59 = 2548) in the following meaning: acorus, spatula, gladiolus. It was identified by de Toni and Šulek as *Iris pseudacorus* (Šugar 2002: 117). The same phytonym is used today in Istra to designate the plants *Phragmites communis, Juncus* and *Carex* — the species found in wet areas. According to Šugar (2002: 22) the name comes from Ital. *palude* < Lat. *palus* “swamp, marsh”. Semantic development “marsh > the plant that grows in marshy places” that appeared by the synecdoche rule is shown also in Friul. *palût* “marsh; strame, giunchi ed



altre erbe che crescono nelle paludi”, cf. Slov. *palûd*, *paluda* “abgeschwemmter Unrat, Binse, scirpus”, *paludnica* “*caltha palustris*” (Skok 2: 594; Bezlaj 3: 6). If the name *balad* is the reflex of the same Italian appellative, the initial *b-* as well as ending *-ad* could be explained by secondary leaning on *babad*.

There is also another equally possible interpretation of the name: in our previous researches we have already brought in connection the S.-Cr. phytonym *palad* P. vera (Š.; RJA) (together with formally and semantically close S.-Cr. appellatives *palika* “grozd, bajam, rogač i svaki drugi plod koji ostane na stablu i poslije berbe” Vis (Roki-Fortunato), *polik(a)* “Nachlese, Nachernte” (ČDL), *palike* pl. tant. “berba maslina koje su ostale nakon redovnog branja” (Vuković)) with the verb *\*pelti* proceeding from the fact that all S.-Cr. names for P. vera just as the Latin name *pistacium* were founded on perception *strictissimo sensu*, i.e. the visual physical property of the plant → pod, seedcase (Kalezić 2007: 237). Morphologically the phytonym *balad* seems close to the phytonym *palad*. As for denominative motive, it can be of the same type (regarding the grape-like cluster with sitting flowers on the thick axis *id est* corncob) (see § 4.1.).

### Instead of conclusion

In the lack of sufficient numbers of adequate attestations of the phytonyms *čemin*, *kmin*, *manturin cvit* and *balad* it would be too rash or too hasty to give a final judgment on their origin. However, re-examining previously supposed etymologies as well as making new attempts to incorporate these names into the particular lexical families could be an important clue on a way toward revealing their definite etymologies.

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