DESIGNING A DICTIONARY OF ARCHAIC NAMES OF THE TRIBES IN THE BALKAN PENINSULA

Dragomir LALCHEV
"Neofit Rilski" South-Western University, Sofia, Bulgaria

Abstract

The linguistic research on ethnonyms and their lexicographic representation in a dictionary (of interpretation/analysis) is related to issues and other sciences in the field of general ethnology. Due to the location of the Balkan Peninsula at a crossroads, the historical background left lasting ethnic marks behind, not only in archaeology, but also in toponymy. The corpus of the dictionary will consist of two main groups of tribal names: macro- and microethnonyms. A precise lexicographic analysis of ethnonyms will offer the opportunity to clarify the dynamics of ethnolinguistic processes.

Key words: *ethnonyms, lexicography, ethnolinguistic, toponymy, Balkan*

Résumé

La recherche linguistique des ethnonymes et leur représentation lexicographique dans un dictionnaire (voué à l'interprétation et à l'analyse) doit d'abord leur consacrer une investigation linguistique nécéssairement liée aux questions qui préoccupent l'ethnologie générale et les autres sciences qui lui sont apparentées. Parce que la Péninsule Balkanique s'est toujours trouvée, tout au long de son histoire, au carrefour de grandes routes du monde, son passé historique n'aura point manqué de laisser de persistantes traces et non pas dans la seule archéologie, mais aussi bien dans la toponymie. Le corpus du futur dictionnaire des noms portés par les tribus anciennes sera composé de deux principales et vastes parties, réservées, respectivement, aux macro-ethnonymes et aux micro-ethnonymes. Nous envisageons d'entreprendre une analyse lexicographique précise desdits ethnonymes, afin d'élucider les détails de la dynamique inhérente aux processus de nature ethno-linguistique.

Mots-clés: *ethnonyme, lexicographie, ethnolinguistique, toponymie, Balkanique*

The creation of a historical ethnonymic dictionary (of interpretation/analysis), which contains a complete corpus of names, meets the need for a stratigraphy of ethnolinguistic names of the tribes and populations that had lived in the Balkan countries since ancient times (Georgiev, 1966: 188-195; Дуриданов, 2006: 133-145). It will actually be an *ethnonymicon*, the vocabulary of which will consist of names relating to different periods.

The research aims to establish, based on the geographic spread of ethnonyms in the Balkan toponymy, the ways followed by various historical tribes that migrated into the Balkan Peninsula. Therefore, it is about the historical territory where the ethnic wave had an impact and where it left traces of tribes in toponymy.

BDD-A9548 © 2014 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:08 UTC)

The linguistic research on ethnonyms and their lexicographic representation in a dictionary of interpretation is related to issues and other sciences in the field of general ethnology such as: history, archaeology, demography, linguistic geography, dialectology, ethnography, folklore.

The creation of this ethnolexicon also concerns the interpretation of important ethnogenesis issues, the internal territorial translocation and continental migration of tribal communities from different historical periods (Laltschev, 1999: 103-112).

The theoretical part of the research also deals with other ethnolinguistic issues, such as linguistic interference and bilingualism of the Balkan linguistic union.

This research complex is typologically related to extra-linguistic factors in the creation of toponyms, whose structure contains ethnonyms. These factors are language, religion, ethnocultural and life-related traditions, ethnopsychology in its dynamic context. Many of the great tribes and microgroups of population which created these toponyms have already disappeared from history. Nowadays, some of them are part of the present Balkan nations. The elaboration of the historical Balkan ethnolexicon will make use, after a rigorous selection, of the most appropriate ethnolinguistic scientific research, based on historical documents and factual information from a complex scientific perspective.

The corpus of the dictionary consists of two main groups of tribal names: macro- and microethnonyms, that some scientists called ethnographonyms. As names of tribes it includes some macroethnonyms of totemic or sacred semantics. They named compact macroethnic communities with different, relatively stable particularities of language, colloquial language, religion, ethnoculture, phychology and ethnic self-awareness. The ethnonym bearers in this group are tens of tribes of the Balkan Peninsula substratum until the 3rd century B.C.: *Géten*, *Móesen*, *Béssen*, *Odrýsen*, *Tribáller*, *Krobýzen*, *Bríger*, *Makedóner*, *Paióner*, *Bistóner*, *Bisálter*, *Krestóner*, *Méden*, *Dardáner*, *Sapáier*, etc.

The Thracian tribes extend to the Carpathians in the north, on the Chalkidike Peninsula and Chersonesos in the south, to the rivers Vardar and Morava in the west.

Macroethnonyms include both the names of the Roman, Anglo-Saxon, old Bulgarian tribal substrata, and the Slavic tribes in the Balkan Peninsula after the great migration in the 5th and 6th centuries in Central Europe. For instance: *Séverzi*, *Éserzi*, *Milíngi*, *Smoljáni*, *Strimóni*, *Rinhíni*, *Velegezíti*, *Dragovíti*, *Sagudáti*, *Bersíti*, *Vajuníti* u.a. (Vasmer, 1941: 32)

The map of the tribes in the Balkan Peninsula was actually a map of the territories inhabited by those tribes (Дуйчев, 1942: 229-270; 1998: 158-366).

They also include *Wlassen* (Vlachs) with a variety of synonymous ethnonyms, which are considered *Balkan-Latin* tribes and descendants of the Romanized Thracians. But in their vocabulary there are also many Slavic words and expressions, since they mixed with the Slavs in the villages around the Pindus Mountains (Селищев, 1931: 207-248).

The corpus of microethnonyms varies a lot according to structure and meaning. It contains the names of different groups of ethnographic peoples, whose semantics is related to linguistic particularities, folklore and clothing differences.

Microethnonyms were formed from nicknames. Of special interest are the Karioti, the descendants of the Greecized Bulgarian Slavs in Southern Thrace, who are today concentrated around Komotini and other towns in northern Greece.

BDD-A9548 © 2014 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:08 UTC)

Due to the location of the Balkan Peninsula at a crossroads, the historical background left marks not only in archaeology, but also in the toponymy of Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, Greece and Romania. A lexicographic analysis of ethnonyms offers the opportunity to explain the dynamics of ethnolinguistic processes (Заимов, 1967: 15 и сл.; Дуриданов, 1993/1994: 406-417).

They are characterized by geographic names, containing concrete ethnonyms within their grammatical structure. The method applied in designing this Balkan ethnonymic dictionary of interpretation is the comparative-historical method.

A connection will be made between specialized dictionaries and dictionaries of onomastic interpretation in Slavonic and non-Slavonic lexicography.

As for the structure of the dictionary, there will be a distinction of principle between the functionality and the semantics of appellatives and names of tribes, which are ethnonymic names.

Each ethnonym occurs in the dictionary as an independent word, alphabetically (Филипец, 1988: 289-294; Лалчев, 1994: 186-191).

What follows is an etymological analysis which contains documentation indications in historical sources. The ethnonyms with unclear or difficult etymology are presented with the scientific theories in a well-reasoned context. At the end of each entry, there are examples consisting of many historical anthroponyms and toponyms, which include, in their morphological structure, elements associated with the indicated ethnonym.

This will lead to an appropriate presentation of the ethnonym structure models, their specific spread, stratigraphy and chronological frequency. Their structural diversity is reflected in synonymic, phonetic and morphological variants, which are mentioned alphabetically. By computerized processing, one could introduce in this work the ethnonymic and onomastic data by making use of maps (Görner, 1963: 134; Moldovanu, 2010: 140-219).

The design of a historical ethnolexicon of the Balkan Peninsula represents the effort of a group of responsible linguists. Lexicographers and specialists in the field of Balkan and Slavic ethnolinguistics need such a dictionary, which is also associated with the design of a future Slavic linguistic and onomastic atlas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Detschev, D., *Die Thrakischen Sprachreste*, Wien, 1957.

Georgiev, Vl., *Die europäische Makrohydronymie und Frage nach der Urheimat der Indoeuropäer,* in Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Hague – Paris, 1966, p. 188-195.

Georgiev, Vl., *Introduction to the History of the Indo-European Languages*, Sofia, 1981.

Gordon, O., Bechet, Fl., Creția, G., Costa, I., Doroftei, D., Nicolae, S., Oancea, M-L., *Toponimia mitică europeană*, Bucureşti, Editura Universității din Bucureşti, 2010.

Görner, Fr., *Die Bildung der Ethnika von Ortsnamen im serbokroatischen Sprachraum. Wiesbaden,* Sofia, 1963.

Ionescu, C., *Dicționar de onomastică*, Bucureşti, Editura Elion, 2008.

Iordan, I., *Toponimia românească*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 1963.

BDD-A9548 © 2014 Editura Sitech

Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:08 UTC)

Lalchev, D., *Neue Sprachzeugnisse der Substrattoponymie für die ethnische Translokation der brigischen* (*phrygischen*) *Stamme in vorzeitlichen Makedonien, Thrakien und Kleinasien*, in Archiv für bulgarische Philologie. Band III. Studia linguistica. In Honorem Iv. Duridanov. Sofia Univ. Verlag "St. Kliment Ochridski", Sofia, 1999, p. 103-112.

Moldovanu, D. *Teoria câmpurilor toponimice*, Iaşi, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2010.

Tomaschek, W., *Die alten Thraker*. *Eine Ethnologische Untersuchung*, 2. Sitzungsbericht der philos.-hist. Klasse der Wiener Akad, 131, Band I. Abhandlung, 1894, p. 1-103.

Vasmer, M., *Die Slawen in Griechenland*, Berlin, 1941.

BDD-A9548 © 2014 Editura Sitech

Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.77 (2026-11-18 10:57:08 UTC)