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On the Ambiguity of the Word *Haiduc*

Abstract: *In this article, we will analyse the term haiduc, common to Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian and Serbian, as it is described in the thesaurus-dictionaries of these languages. In order to emphasize its different chronological stratigraphy and status in the lexical and semantic systems of the languages mentioned, the situation in Hungarian and Turkish, as sources of penetration of the term haiduc, will also be discussed. There will pointed out the fundamental meanings of a distinctive semantic opposition, "hoț, bandit, tâlhar de drumul mare", the meaning having mainly the social connotation of "a man (usually a peasant) who, revolting against oppressing, left his home and lived in the woods, alone or in bands, plundering the reach people and helping the poor", leading to "a defender, a fighter for national liberation during the Othman oppression". There will also be revealed the specialized meanings preserved in the popular aspects and in onomastics, whose ambiguity is contextually annulled.*

Key words*: haiduc, linguistic contacts, Romanian, Albanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Serbian.*

The word has a specific history. It has been used both in the administrative language of the Ottoman period, prior to the fight for freedom, and during the age of the revival of the peoples in the Balkan area. It is still in use today. Its meanings, registered in dictionaries, point to colloquial and literary usages of the term.

How did it enter the linguistic circuit in the Balkan area? Which is its evolution in Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian and Serbian? What kind of metaphorical meanings and connotations could apply to the common meaning of the term *haiduc*? The aim of our article is to address these questions, after looking up the term in the authoritative dictionaries of the languages mentioned above. We have not included Greek in our study since the dictionary of "Aristotel" University, Greece, *Λεξικό της κοινής νεοελληνικής*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2002, does not register the term.

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Firstly, in order to ensure a better understanding of the origin and the meanings of the term *haiduc*, we provide the dictionary entries in Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian and Serbian, formally arranged in alphabetical order.

For **hajdút** (Albanian), Eqrem Çabej establishes the following meanings "zanati i hajdutit; vjedhje – a *haiduc's* job, stealing" and mentions that it is a common word, although in Albanian it does not belong to the ancient, received terms, illustrated through a comparison of old literary texts to new ones: "Fjalë e përhapur pothuajse në gjithë perëndimore. Në shqipen nuk është një nga huazimet e vjetra turke"- "commonly used word. In Albanian, it is not included among the ancient, received terms" (Çabej, 346; cf. FS, 454). As far as the origin of the term is concerned, the author of the dictionary considers that it has its origin in the Turkish *haydud* < Hun. *Hajdú*, compared to the Macedonian **ајдук**, but especially, taking into account the lexical form of the Albanian *hajduçe*, with the Turkish suffix *–çe* and the lexical recordings of the philologists Fr. Miklosich (TE I 302), G. Meyer 144, G. Weigand 27, E. Berneker I 375, Lokotsch 61vv., Vasmer REW I 251.

The Dictionary of the Academy of Sciences registers the Albanian **hajdút "**vjedhës – hoț; cub, kusar – tîlhar; kaçak – comitagiu" (FSS, 454).

The Bulgarian lexicographic works record several meanings preserved by the folk tradition. Thus, Naiden Gherov records the forms **хайду́къ** şi **хайду́тинъ**, which he considers to be of Turkish origin, with the meanings: 1. „Човек, излязъл в гора с оръжие да пресреща людето да ги обира"-"Armed man, on the watch in the woods to rob people" and the synonyms *bandit*, *haramiu*, *crai*, including the phonetic version **хайдут**, corresponding to the Turkish **haydut**. 2. „Извлак от тенекия или от стъкло като кратуна на единия край за вадене вино, ракия из бъчва със смучение"-"Long metal or glass tool, in the shape of a bottle gourd used for extracting wine or brandy from the barrel" (RBE, V, 481).

The dictionary of contemporary Bulgarian, together with **хайду́к**, considered as having multiple origins, Turkish and Hungarian, records the form **хайдутин** with the meaning "old-fashioned". In a separate article, **хайду́тин,** a "historical" term, is defined as „народен закрилник и борец с оръжие в ръка срещу турските потисници през време на робството"-"national defender and fighter, who fought against the Turkish conquerors during the Ottoman domination", and the origin is Turkish. (RSBKE, III, 544; the same with BTR, 1031, but with the distinction **хайду́к** < Turkish and Hungarian**,** and **хайду́т[ин]** < Turkish).

According to the main Macedonian lexicographic source, *The Expalantory Dictionary of Macedonian,* put together by the Institute of the Macedonian „Krste Misirkov", **ајдук** and the suffixed form **ајдутин** have the meaning of **„**отпадник што се борел против турската власт"-"rebel who fights against the Turkish conquerors", a "historical" term, and the figurative meaning „крадец, разбојник, отпадник од власта и од законот"-"thief, rebel fighting against the establishment and the laws" (TRMJ, I, 18, 19).

In *The Illustrated Encyclopedic Dictionary*, the Romanian **haidúc** has two meanings: "man (usually peasant), who, fighting the rulers, left his home and lived alone or in bands, in the woods, robbing the rich and helping the poor" and "mercenary soldier", a "historical" term. As far as the origin is concerned, two possibilities are provided, either Bulgarian or Serbian (DEI, 435).

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In H. Tiktin's dictionary, the term is considered as being of Hungarian origin and having two opposite meanings: "soldier" and "rebel fighting against authorities" (TDRG, II, 643).

The Dictionary of the Academy provides three meanings for the word **haidúc:** "soldier for jails", "guardian of jails" and "a kind of thief (acting alone or in groups led by a captain), who lived in the woods and robbed the rich" (DA, 274). For the last meaning the term **haidúk,** from Serbian, is indicated, and for the first two, the pl. **hajdúk <** sg. **hajdú,** from Hungarian.

D. Macrea's dictionary takes over the information in *The Dictionary of the Academy* with a difference, "mercenary soldier", a "historical" term, replaces "soldier for jails" in DA (DLRM, 352).

The meanings of "guardian of jails" and "mercenary soldier", in use during a specific age and on a relatively small area (Maramures and northern Transylvania), gradually disappeared, being currently found only in regional anthologies of folk songs, where the prison guard is called **haidúc.**

For the Serbian term **àjдȳк < хajду,** the dictionary of Serbian establishes the following meanings: „1. одметник од турске власти и борац против ње за време робовања под Турцима – rebel fighting against Turkish authorities 2. одметник од закона, разбојник – rebel fighting against the law, thief. 3. [Archaic] слуга код суда у Угарской и у Срему, пандур – servant, footman of the court in Hungary and Srem. 4. натега, направа (обично од тикве) за ваћење течности - a bottle gourd used for extracting wine or brandy from the barrel; **ајдук** (натега) плод дугуљаст, на йедном крайу у лопту проширена тиква по средини сужена као чибук – tool or fruit, slim at one of its ends, round and widened at the other and narrow in the middle. 5.ноћурак *Mirabilis jalapa* – the beauty of the night, *Mirabilis jalapa*". For the first meaning a Turkish origin is indicated, whereas for the meanings 2 and 3, a Hungarian one is provided (RS, 44). We should also consider the Turkish terms in Serbo-Croatian, in an investigation by Abdulah Škaljić, **àjдȳк / хajдук,** the meanings registered by the thesaurus-dictionary being similar, but an in-depth research reveals the following etymology: Serbian-Croat **àjдȳк / хajдук** < Turkish **haydud** „drumski razbojnik – "road robber" <Hungarian **hayduk**, pl. < **haydu** „vojnik-soldat" < ar. inf. **haydūd** (the verb **hādä** „skrenuti s pravog puta – leave the straight and narrow path", hence, the Serbian-Croat, "odmetnuti se"-"go far away; leave; act against" (Škaljić, 300).

Being aware of the fact that once a term is borrowed by a language (or more), its meanings or connotations are also borrowed, resulting in various combinations, we have consulted the main dictionaries of Hungarian and Turkish, to have a clear picture of the types of borrowing and the meanings registered by the lexicographic sources quoted above.

The definition of the Turkish term **haydút** provided by *The Etymologic Dictionary of Turkish* is "armed person who robs"; "Hungarian peasant", and *Türkçe Sözlük* records the meaning "yol kesici"-"the man who is on the watch; thief" (TDES, 176**,** TS, 135). The bilingual dictionary, put together by the Institute of Oriental Studies of Moscow, translates **haydúk (-ğiu)** by "гайду́к"-"haiduc", mentioning the archaic register and by "бандит"-"thief", colloquial, with the version **haydút(-du)** "разбойник"-"thief", "грабитель"-"robber" (TRS, 395).

In Hungarian, the word **hajdú**, sg., recorded in the 15th century, has a neutral, clear connotation – *drover, serf drover*. In the following century, the word denotes an ordinary

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soldier, from among the drovers or the common people living in the border area between Austria and the Turkish Empire, and temporarily joining the light cavalry with temporary purposes. In the late 16th century and the early 17th century, the **hajdúk,** pl., joined the army run by István Bocskai and fought against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the victory, they were given generous compensations, privileges and lands, becoming a higher class, with a specific social status and culture. Noble performing different jobs in the army administration or at the court, they participate to defence operations at the border with the Ottoman Empire, being likened to the hussars. The uniform worn by the new law officers, richly decorated and minutely embroidered is called **hajdú**. The dictionary of Hungarian introduces the term as derived from **hajtó < hajt "**to catch; to drive; to take; to send; to urge; to head for". It also includes the meanings of the following compound nouns, derived by specialization: **~kapitány** "the leader, the captain"**, ~káposzta** "a kind of cabbage; a dish of sour cabbage with smoked sausages or pork meat"**, ~tánc** "an alert dance"**, ~város** "town established by haiduc(i)" (Bart István, 66; MÉK, 476). Thus, in Hungarian, the term **hajdú** is derived on the Hungarian linguistic area and it does nor have the meanings found in Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian and Serbian-Croat.

After consulting the etymologic sections and the dictionary definitions for the languages concerned, we point out the existence of two main meanings common to Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian and Serbian: "thief; rod robber" and "fighter; defender of freedom", with different origins. As far as the origin of the term in the respective languages is concerned, the negative meaning of criminal is connected to Turkish, whereas the one of soldier, defender of freedom, servant is connected to Hungarian. The plural form of the Hungarian noun **hajdúk** corresponds to the Romanian. **haiduc,** the Bulgarian **хайдук** and the version **айду́к,** being phonetically related to the Bulgarian dialects, to the Macedonian **ајдук,** with no etymological explanation, but defining the positive aspects of the actions of a *haiduc* and the negative, figurative meaning, leading to the conclusion that the term was initially used with a positive meaning, its semantic degradation coming in use later, the Serbian **àјдȗк.** The Albanian **hajdút** and the Bugarian **хайду́т** indicate the Turkish origin and the Bulgarian suffixed form **хайду́тин** and the Macedonian **ајдутин** are adaptations to the morphological systems of these languages. Therefore, in Bulgarian, Macedonian and Serbian, the word **haiduc** entered from Hungarian and Turkish, and in Albanian, from Turkish. As far as the Romanian term is concerned, the sources are multiple: Turkish, Bulgarian, Serbian, for the meanings of common soldier, and for those of mercenary and prison guard, from Hungarian (Cf. Berneker I, 375; Vasmer, 383; of different opinion Preobraženskii, I, 116, of Osman-Turkish origin for Bulgarian, Serbian and Polish).

However, *haiduc* sums up the spirit of a troubled age and its meanings are easy to understand. The term can be easily connected to the historical conditions of the 14th and 15th centuries, an age when a large number of Serbian, Croat and Romanian shepherds, running from the Turks, to whom runaway Hungarian serfs could be added – settled on the Hungarian plateau" (Ionescu-Nişcov, 114). As a consequence of the rise of cattle trading, the people that drove the cattle to the market to be sold were called haiduci. They were shepherds or cattle keepers and serfs. For fear that the bands of thieves might attack them, "the haiduci were organized in groups and bore arms" to defend themselves. Starting with the 16th century, cattle trading started to decrease, so these people had no occupation. Being armed, they

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started roaming around and robbing. Therefore, the term comes to denote any criminal, committing minor or more serious offences, such as murder, of rapid amassing of fortune, an individual that is isolated by his choice to go against laws and the authorities. Present in the Balkan area, the term confirms the universal character of one of the oldest professions. With this meaning the term *haiduc* enters the Balkan region from Turkish, having only negative connotations. To their establishment as a regional trait there contributed not only the territorial distribution of the Turkish origin elements within the languages concerned (Cf. TDES, 176 and the dictionaries cited for the corresponding Turkish terms *seymen, efe, eşkija* etc.), but also of the syntagms containing **haydut** in Turkish (**haydut (-du) çetesi** "шайка грабителей", **haydut (-du) yatağı** "воровской разбойнический притóн", **deniz haydut(-du)** "морской разбойник; пират", the phrase **haydut (-du) gibi** "как разбойник"; "верзила"; "громúла" etc. (TRS, 182).

Crimes was sanctioned by the administration, whose functions were expressed in an official language that differed from that of the conquered population. Gradually, an individual's welfare means the welfare of those close to them, and this becomes a policy of national uprising, characteristic of those peoples enslaved by others. This marks the apparition of another meaning, different from the meanings in Hungarian and Turkish, that of "rebel fighting against social injustice and national or foreign conquerors", a meaning superimposed on the semantic structure of the old term.

Starting with the 17th century, **haidúc** creates the history of the peoples conquered by the Ottoman Empire. Criminals were replaced by people who loved their country and hoped for freedom. The initial term that had entered the Balkan region lost the negative meanings and spread throughout the region, acquiring historical dignity (on the first uses of this meaning cf. Osinin, 23-24; Vasmer, 383).

Thus, it is difficult to attribute the apparition of the new meanings to only one of the languages mentioned – Hungarian, Turkish, Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian and Serbo-Croatian, the meanings being connected to identical actual, extra-linguistic elements. We distinguish three stages of the semantic development of the term: **haiduc** "thief, road robber; "→ the meaning having a social connotation of "man (usually peasant) fighting the rulers, leaving his home and living alone or in bands, in the woods, robbing the rich and helping the poor" → "fighter, defender of national freedom during the Ottoman rule". The last two stages represent the difference between the simple notion of thief and *haiduc*, with a "historical" meaning. And it is the two last meanings that inspired legends and folk songs. The first meaning is characteristic of the colloquial and popular register and the other belong to a more specialized domain - social, historical and political relations.

Starting from the negative meaning preserved in the folk aspects of Bulgarian, we naturally arrived at the secondary specialized meaning **„**хитър човек"- "cunning, sly person", illustrated in the village of Dobroslavți, Sofia (Gălăbov, 68), which shows that the term boasts inner resources.

The capacity of semantic re-shaping could be seen in the meaning "servant" in Serbo-Croatian. This meaning, together with the Hungarian **hajdú** "uniform", is connected to the clothing worn by the Hungarian haiduci, which, at the time, was the imposed servants' dress (cf. Preobraženskii, I, 116).

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The specialized term belonging to the folk register of Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian is also worth mentioning as in "long metal or glass tool (cf. RBE, V, 481), in the shape of a bottle gourd used for extracting wine or brandy from the barrel", the meaning being connected to folk psychology and ethnographic characteristics. The term is documented in the Bulgarian dialects in county of Samokov through the figurative meaning „кратунка за изваждане на вино"-bottle gourd for wine" matching the phrase *Зе́ми айду́ко, и́звади ма́лко ви́но! – Take the gourd and get some wine!* (Vakarelska-Ciobanska, 18).

The meanings "mercenary soldier", "soldier for jail" and "prison guardian" correspond to a limited historical period and geographical area in Romania, fact which led to their extinction. The fact that this meaning is no longer in use and it is not documented in the other dictionaries is proof of the dynamics of synonyms within each language.

In Serbo-Croatian folk botany *haiduc* has the meaning "ноћурак" – "*Mirabilis jalapa* plant, corresponding to the Romanian *frumoasa nopţii* or *barba împăratului, noreea* etc". In the same field, lexicographic works attest compound adjectives designating plants: the Bulgarian **ъйду́шки мийле́м** „лековито растение за рани" – "medicinal plant used to cure wounds" (word-for-word translation "alifia haiducului"), well-known in the Troian county (Kovacev, 235), the Bulgarian **хайдучка трева –** "*Achillea millefolium* plant" (RBE, V, 481), the Romanian *coada şoricelului*, known for its antiseptic properties and *iarbă-voiniceascâ* or *varga-ciobanului* etc., the Bulgarian **хайдушки тютюн** – "*Lysimachia vulgaris* plant", similar to the Romanian *tutunaş, floarea-duhanului, tutun turcesc (Nicotiana rustica),* the Macedonian **ајдучка трева** = **ајдучица** (s. f.) **„**вид цвеќе со долго стебленце и со бели или жолти цветови, лековита билка, ајдучка трева: *Achillea millefolium*" – "long-stemmed medicinal plant with yellow and white flowers, *Achillea millefolium*" (TRMJ, I, 18, 19), sb. **àjдȗк-тра́ва** „сукрвичина" – „*Lychnis coronaria* plant" (RS, 44).Without losing the meaning of **haidúc,** from the Romanian plants we may also mention **sângele voinicului** "*Lathirus odoratus"*, as according to folk authors **voinic** and **haidúc** have the same meaning – the fighter for the welfare of the poor or for freedom, the two semantically associated terms including the idea of physical and moral beauty

We also add the Bulgarian **хайду́тска чêвêрм'ò** „животно, печено в нагорещен трап" – "roasted animal in a hot pit", compound from the folk cookery field and known in the counties of Smolean, Asenovgrad and Devin (Stoicev, 293).

As a term with deep socio-historical meanings, and open to extra-linguistic influences, *haiduc* can be found with proper names, proving its semantic productivity. In this respect, it is worth considering the Bulgarian name of the constellation **Айдуци** "Ursa mare", linked to the legend of the Wallachian child stolen by the haiduci (Mladenova, 80).

Lastly, the importance of the word is reflected by countless collocations, whose content reflects the folk mentality in the indicated area, these being the result of intense and multidirectional contact. The Albanian *Hajdut xhepash* – petty thief, *hajdut malesh* – haiduc from the mountain, *fole (strehë) hajdutësh* – the shelter of thieves, the Bulgarian *пладнешки хайдук* „човек, който върши явни и дръзки кражби" – "thief who is not afraid to rob openly" (RSBKE, III, 544; BTR, 1031). We give further examples through negative sayings, trying to capture the meaning: the Albanian *Gjeti hajduti thesin (u poq hajduti me thesin) – the haiduc touched the bag* (FSS, 454), the Bulgarian *Айду́чки дом не вире́е* – "*the house, family of a haiduc will not last long*", *Мо́же ли се́ло без айду́к и бес ку́рва!* – "Each village

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has its bad people" (Vakarelska-Ciobanska, 18), *Това ся вика майстория: хайдутин хаидутина да краде* – "*it's a big thing that the haiduc steals from another haiduc*" etc. (RBE, V, 481).

We notice a specialization oriented towards different semantic fields, motivated by people's tendency to liken the traits of the haiduc to real elements of their lives. Hence, the different chronological stratigraphy and the different status in the lexical and semantic systems of the languages in question related to the two main languages from which the term is derived – Hungarian and Turkish.

The configuration of the common meanings leads to the conclusion that the phenomenon is not one of bilingualism for any of the languages discussed, but of intense linguistic contact.

An in-depth research at the levels of the dialects of each language may correct and complete this article. However, we claim that this term, within territorial limits, defines semantic areas in which each meaning becomes clear related to a given context.

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