

Genealogic, Semantic and Structural Approach to the Macedonian Toponymic System¹

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Abstract

The introduction to this paper gives information about the geographic location of the Macedonian macrospace and its naming over history, with special emphasis on the etymology of the macrotoponym Macedonia.

From the semantic aspect, most toponyms have geographic appellatives in their basis: oronyms and hydronyms, toponyms derived on a phytonymic and zoonymic basis, and finally, toponyms which have anthroponyms included in their basis. A minor percent of Macedonian toponyms are derived from appellatives with a non-onomastic basis.

From the structural aspect, toponyms on Macedonian territory are in most cases mono- and bicomponent. Monocomponent toponyms are nouns, adjectives, etc. The *-ec*, *-ica*, *-ik/-nik*, *-ka* suffixes are most common toponomastic suffixes, whose main purpose is substantivisation of the part of a hypothetic attribute sintagma, which was simplified after the rejection of sintagma's non-informative part. Bicomponent toponyms are in most cases adjectives + nouns, but also number + noun, noun + noun, etc., are present.

Analyses dealing with origin indicate that most Macedonian toponyms have Slavic origin. A small amount of toponyms has substrate origin, which is Greek or Roman-Latin, and most toponyms with foreign origin are from Turkish, because of the five-century-long period of Turkish rule in this part of the Balkan Peninsula.

1. Geographic location of the Republic of Macedonia

The objective of this article is to present the toponymic system of the Republic of Macedonia. The Republic of Macedonia (RM) is located in the Balkan Peninsula and has an area of 25,713 km². Our country borders with Greece to the south, with Albania to the west, with Serbia to the north and with Bulgaria to the east.



¹ In the editing process has not been possible to contact the author; so the article is published according to the latest studies.

2. The macrotoponym Macedonia during history

The oldest known name used for Macedonia by Greek seamen was Ematia. Besides the name Ematia, the Greek sailors called the coastland of Macedonia Thrace. The earliest mention of Macedonians as Caucones appears in the Iliad.

In the Roman period, Macedonia was a Roman province in 148 BC. In the 4th century the territory of Macedonia was included in these Roman provinces: Macedonia Prima (with its centre in Salonica), Macedonia Secunda (with its centre in Stobi) and Dardania (with its centre in Scupi). In the period from the 4th to 6th centuries as a diocese, Macedonia came under the large prefecture of Illyricum. This Macedonia diocese included, among others, the provinces Macedonia Prima and Macedonia Salutaris. During the 4th to 6th centuries the province of Macedonia Salutaris was temporarily abolished, and then restored again, so it is not known whether it had continuity of existence. It is known that the province of Macedonia Prima existed the longest. At the beginning of the 6th century, there were again two provinces with the name Macedonia: Macedonia Prima and Macedonia Secunda. The province of Macedonia Secunda is mentioned for last time in 535, during the founding of the Archbishopric of Justiana Prima. At the time of the administrative reforms of Emperor Justinian I in 545, only the existence of the province of Macedonia Secunda is noted. The rest of the territory of Macedonia was incorporated in the provinces of Mediterranean Dacia and Dardania. Interestingly, in the works of the church historians from the 6th and 7th centuries, there is no mention of the provincial division of Macedonia; rather, Macedonia is mentioned in its historical-geographic borders.

In the middle of the 6th century, during the Slavic expansion in Macedonia, Byzantine historian Procopius uses the term Macedonia in its historical-geographic borders. During the 8th and 9th centuries regions in Macedonia inhabited by the Slavs were called by the common term Sclavinia. Beside this term, there is individual mention of the Slav tribes who settled Macedonia: Dragovites, Sagudates, Vayunites, Berzites, Strymians and Rinhines. Among all these tribal names, the longest duration of use was that of the Dragovites. This name was preserved in the name of the diocese with the same name, “The Dragovitian diocese”; the church of the Dragovites existed from the 9th to the 13th century, and even the territory of the feudal lord Stez in the 13th century, with its seat in Prosek, was called “Dragovitian authority” and “the tyranny of the Dragovites”.

In the 8th century Byzantium formed the thema of Macedonia in western Thrace, probably where the non-Slavic refugees from Macedonia fled after the Slavic raids. During the period between the 8th and 11th centuries there was frequent confusion in historic sources in relation to the use of the name of Macedonia as a thema and the name of Macedonia in its historical-geographic meaning.

Because of Bulgarian incursions into Macedonia during the 9th century and after the signing of the peace treaty between Bulgaria and Byzantium in 927, in the sources the historical-geographic territory of Macedonia was called Bulgaria, and inhabitants of the state were called Bulgarians. Yet the 10th century sources still use the tribal designation of the Slavs in Macedonia. The state of Samoil in the 10th century in the historical sources is called the Bulgarian Empire, and its inhabitants are described as Bulgarians. Even so, in a few Byzantine sources, besides the common term Bulgarians, there is also use of the terms Scyths and Mysians for the inhabitants of Macedonia, and the name “Macedonia” for the territory. After the fall of Samoil’s state, the Byzantine thema of Bulgaria was formed on the territory of Macedonia, with its seat in Skopje.

In the period of the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries Byzantine authors use the term Bulgaria for the territory of present-day Bulgaria, and the name Macedonia is used again in its old historical-geographic meaning (Boshkoski, 2003, 203-211).

3. Etymology of the macrotoponym Macedonia

There are two theses about the etymology of the name Macedonia. Some scientists associate the name Macedonia with the Greek adjective ‘makednos’ (*μακεδνός*) which means ‘tall’. This opinion, although rejected by most world authors, is accepted by Greek linguists as a whole, because the word designates an old Greek Dorian tribe – Makednon. But this thesis was rejected by the many scientists who gave a new etymological explanation, and this thesis is seen as final. According to this thesis, the name Macedonia contains two lexical components of Thracian origin: **mak* and **don*. The first component, *mak*, is related with the Indo-European **mak* and means ‘long, tall’. The second component, *don*, means ‘land’, ‘soil’. So, the name Macedonia means high (upper) land, and the Macedonians (Macedons) are inhabitants of the high (upper) land.

The Thracian-Macedonian thesis is confirmed by many historical data included in the old written sources and in the present onomastic corpus of the Thracian-Macedonian territory. Many of the personal and geographical names from this territory in their second component contain the element *don* which means ‘land’, for example: *Sarpidon*, *Varkedon*, *Migdon*, *Migdonia*, *Macedon*, *Singidon* (*Singidunum*, Celtic form - former name of present Belgrade). There are not enough etymologically clear arguments for the thesis that the name Macedonia associates with the Greek appellative *makednos*, i.e. the element *don* in the name Macedonia could not be appropriately explained with the word *makednos*, because in this case the element *dnos* is a suffix (Georgievski, 2001, 211).

4. Systematic research of Macedonian toponymy

Systematic and organised research of the toponymic system of the RM is carried out in the Onomastic Department of the Institute of Macedonian Language (IML) in the capital Skopje. This department has a large quantity of recorded material collected from field work and a smaller amount excerpted from historical documents and sources, including military, cadastre and geographic maps and monographs, and printed books about the folklore of the RM. There are about 300,000 toponymic units in this record.

Based on analysis of about 7,000 toponymic units from the territory of the RM, in the following text we will present the oikonymic and microtoponymic status of the RM in lexical-semantic, structural and genealogic aspects.

5. Oikononyms

We will start with the oikononyms. According to recent statistical data, the territory of the RM has 1,767 settled places, and 34 of them are towns.

Complete analysis of the oikonymic material in the RM shows that most of the oikononyms have been created according to the morphosyntactic model of forming, meaning that most of the villages’ and towns’ names are elliptical toponyms, which were preceded by attribute syntagmas, the first part of which has been substantivised with or without suffixes. Oikononyms which have substantivised adjective form without a suffix include adjectives formed with adopted suffixes *-ov*, *-in*, and also adjectives formed with the ancient defunct adopted suffix *-jb*, which is added to revived nouns. Examples with the suffix *-ov*: *Kumanovo*, *Misleshevo*, *Oreovo*, *Obleshevo*, *Tetovo* etc.; with the suffix *-in*: *Babino*, *Borino*, *Dragorino*, *Gneotino*, *Negotino*; and with the suffix *-jb*: *Batanje*, *Bedinje*, *Bogomila*, *Bratilja*, *Divlje* etc.

The most common suffixes whose purpose is substantivisation of proposed attribute sintagmas are: *-ica*, *-(n)ik* and *-ec*, which have take a part in forming these oikonyms: *Sushica*, *Krakornica*, *Vraneshtica*, *Trstenik*, *Pravednik*, *Jeloshnik*, *Eleshec*, *Staroec*, *Leskoec* etc.

A large number of oikonyms have occurred with toponymisation of onyms which are based on ethnonyms and patronymics like: *Bogdanci*, *Kosharci*, *Vojshanci*, *Zelishta*, *Vozarci*, *Kavadarci*, *Jelovjane*, *Sinichane*, *Kamenjane* etc. A smaller amount of the oikonomic forms have occurred with toponymisation of appellatives like: *Sopot*, *Vrutok*, *Slavej*, *Slatina*, *Varosh*, *Manastir* etc. Finally, the smallest amount of the oikonomic forms are the two-component toponyms like: *Stari Grad*, *Novo Selo*, *Sveti Vrachi*, *Sveta Petka*, *Gorna Boshava*, *Dolno Rodevo* etc.

6. Lexical-semantic analysis of the microtoponyms

Concerning the lexical-semantic aspect about the toponyms in the RM it can be said that in the stem of toponyms of the Tikvesh region the highest percentage belongs to the toponyms with an appellative in the stem and a lower percentage to the onyms. The appellatives which were used as a basis for the creation of toponyms are divided in this analysis into lexical and semantic “nests” as geographic terms like *Poroj* (: poroj ‘torrent’), *Reka* (: reka ‘river’), *Rid* (: rid ‘hill’), *Izvor* (: izvor ‘spring’), *Slatina* (: slatina, ‘salt-spring’); phytonyms *Krushje* (: krusha ‘pear’, *Pirus fommunis*), *Vrba* (: vrba ‘willow’, *Salix*), *Migdali* (: migdal, ‘almond’ *Prunus amygdalus*), *Borje* (: bor ‘pine’, *Pinus*), *Bukovo* (: buka, ‘beech’, *Phagus silvatica*); zoonyms *Svinjishte* (svinja ‘swine’, *Sus*), *Elenistha* (elen, ‘deer’, *Cervus*), *Garváncheto* (gavran ‘raven’, *Corvus corax*), *Zajacharot* (zajak ‘rabbit’, *Lepus*), *Vachjak* (volk ‘wolf’, *Lupus*) etc. Furthermore, each of these nests was subject to sub-division and new branching out according to some defined common denominator. For example, the geographic terms are divided into three semantic groups: slopes, upper sections and hydrographic objects. In addition, hydrographic objects are further divided into natural and artificial, while the natural ones are further divided into natural with or without headwaters, etc. About the toponyms which have onyms in their base, it can be said that their base includes personal names, nicknames, other toponyms, patronyms and ethnonyms.

7. Structural analysis of the microtoponyms

From the structural aspect, the toponyms on the territory of the RM are created with the participation of the four models of creating toponyms which are primarily immanent to the creation of lexemes. These models are the lexical-semantic, lexical-syntax, morphological-syntax and morphological (affix) manners of word creation.

Many toponyms in the RM were formed with the lexical-semantic model. They were created with toponymisation of the appellatives which can be equal to basic nouns and equal to extrapolated nouns. In the toponyms equal to extrapolated nouns we first considered the augmentative nouns formed in the suffixes: *-ishte* and *-ina*. Then we considered the toponyms equal to the diminutive nouns formed with the simple suffixes: *-ec*, *-ica*, *-ka*, *-che*, *-e*, including the complex ones: *-inka*, *-ichka*, *-iche* and *-ence*. From this analysis we concluded that with the suffix *-ec*, which is mainly added to masculine nouns, a diminutive form in neuter gender noun is derived as in the toponym *Blatec*. As for the suffix *-ka*, which is commonly added to feminine nouns, we conclude that it is a more productive diminutive suffix compared to the suffix *-ica*, which is quite an unproductive diminutive suffix in the toponymy of the RM. The common Slavic suffix *-ka* that has a diminutive meaning, apart from feminine nouns, in the toponyms from the RM also forms a diminutive with masculine gender nouns (in some cases). It is illustrated with the following toponyms: *Ormankite*, *Sulinarka* (< *Solinárka*), *Tumbáarkata* and *Cuculka*, *Cucúlkata*. The

most productive diminutive suffix in the toponymy of the RM is the *-che* suffix which in terms of the frequency parameter is in correlation with the situation in the standard Macedonian language. In a certain number of toponyms in which there is a phytonymic or zoonymic basis, the suffix *-che* occurs in a modified diminutive function, which indicates that it serves to emphasise the content “small in presence on the terrain” and not “small in size”. Examples: *Bôrcheto*, *Gabarche*, *Gabîrcheto*, *Garvânchet*, *Zajacharcheto*, *Kokarche*, *Kukudenche*, *Lastavich'to* (< *Lastavicheto*), *Liljâche*, *Lil'jacheto* and *Sokôche*. With the suffixes *-e* and *-ok*, which from the diachronic point of view are quite old diminutive suffixes, a limited number of diminutive nouns are formed in the toponymy of the RM. Most commonly present is the *-ichka* suffix from the complex diminutive suffixes.

An especially interesting toponymic forming, which has occurred with toponymisation of extrapolated nouns, are the toponyms equal to extrapolated nouns with the suffix *-ika* (*Boríkite*, *Gradikata*, *Javorika*, *Klenikata*, *Trníka* etc.) and the toponyms equal to extrapolated nouns with the suffix *-lo* (*Vikalo*, *Jagnilo*, *Krstálo*, *Pochivalo*, *Skakalo* etc.).

In the toponymy of the RM we can also notice such appellatives which have occurred with prefixation. One of them is equal to derived nouns with prefixes (*Za-brdo*, *Za-krshot*, *Za-nogite*, *Obs-tranica*, *Pr-ísapta* etc), and the others are equal to verbal nouns with prefixes (*Zagrebite*, *Preodot*, *Progon*, *Preseka*, *Prosek* etc.).

In the toponyms of the RM we can also see toponyms which have occurred with toponymisation of nouns with *nomina loci* meaning, formed with the suffixes: *-ishte*, *-ar*, *-arnik* and *-ána*. Regarding these creations of nouns the most productive is the *-ishte* suffix which can be added to noun, verbal and adjective stems. The *-ána* suffix, which is of Turkish origin, is the least present in the field, contrary to the previous one.

The toponyms equal to onyms have been created with the lexical-semantic word-forming model, which can be ethnonyms, patronyms, personal names, names of saints and nicknames. They are followed by the separate groups of toponyms equal to verbs, exclamations and complex appellatives.

After considering the toponyms that have been created with toponymisation of finalised lexical units, we started to analyse the derived toponyms, which were derived by using suffixes which commonly have a substantivising function. This means that they can form nouns from the unsubstantivised language elements. The following were separated as suffixes that are involved in the derivation of toponyms in the toponymy of the RM: *-ica*, *-ec*, *-ik/-nik*, *-ka*, *-ak/-jak*, *-ach*, *-esh*, *-ija*, *-lak/-lák*. The suffix *-je* also has a structural-toponymic function. It is present in the *Povardarje* toponym, where we have prefixation, the carrier of which is the preposition *po*.

According to the structural and grammar classification of the toponyms, we have considered the elliptical toponyms, i.e. those that were preceded by attribute syntagmas from which the centre of the noun group has dropped, expressed commonly with some general noun where the toponym comes down to an adjective component. In the toponymy of the RM the number of the elliptical toponyms which are equal to non-derived adjectives is small, contrary to those toponyms equal to derived adjectives. In the toponyms equal to derived adjectives, the following suffixes are present as adjectival suffixes: *-in-*, *-j-*, *-ov-*, *-sk-*, *-en-* and *-av-*. Here we would like to point out the suffix *-in-*, which in some regions of the RM, certainly in the Tikvesh region, has developed a secondary-toponymic function, which means that it has the capability to form toponyms from other toponyms (examples: *Bánchino* (: *Banica* (< *Banjica*)), *Krivolachino* (: *Krivolak*) and *Kashtino* (: *Kashta*)).

Within the single-component toponyms there is a separate group of toponyms equal to adverbs and toponyms equal to participles, followed by two-component toponyms as the largest group of toponymic formations in the toponymy of the RM. Within this group we first considered the toponym compounds among which we identify: toponyms consisting

of adjective and noun stems, toponyms consisting of two noun stems, toponyms consisting of verbal and noun stems, toponyms consisting of anthroponym and noun stems, toponyms consisting of adverb and noun stems, toponyms consisting of adjectives and nouns, toponyms consisting of adjectives and adverbs, toponyms consisting of number and noun stems and toponyms consisting of negation + verb + noun.

After the toponym compounds we found the toponym compositions which include toponyms composed of non-derived adjectives and nouns and then toponyms consisting of derived adjectives and nouns where the derivation of the adjective was made with the following suffixes: *-in*, *-jb*, *-bjb*, *-ov/-ev-*, *-en-*, *-sk-*, and rarely with the following suffixes: *-it*, *-liv*, *-ovit*. The third group in the toponym compositions are the toponyms consisting of verbal adjectives and nouns, followed by toponyms consisting of adjective and adjective and toponyms consisting of adjective and adverb. A separate group of toponym compositions, the first component of which is not an adjective, are the two-component toponyms consisting of noun and noun, followed by the toponyms in which the first component is a number (which can be cardinal or ordinal number) and the second component is a noun, followed by: toponyms consisting of verb and noun, toponyms consisting of pronoun and noun, toponyms consisting of adverb and noun, toponyms consisting of preposition and noun, toponyms consisting of adjunct and noun as well as toponyms consisting of exclamation and noun.

After the above two-component toponym formations we have also considered several toponym compositions consisting of three parts, and the last group were the toponyms equal to propositional syntagmas.

8. Toponyms from the genealogical aspect

About the genealogical origin of the lexemes which have a part in the creation of toponyms on the territory of the RM, it can be concluded that most of the lexemes have Slavic origin. In the toponymic material also there are many proto-Slavic, old-Slavic and dialectical lexemes. Lesser lexemes have substrate, Greek, Roman-Latin and Turkish origin.

Examples for toponyms with substrate origin are: *Vardar*, *Tumba*, *Bigor*, *Straga*, etc.; with Greek origin: *Shtip*, *Drum*, *Maver*, *Manastir*, *Mandra*, *Migdal*, etc.; and with Roman-Latin origin: *Bachilo*, *Glaca*, *Kastel*, *Klisura*, *Kukol*.

Most of the lexemes with non-Slavic origin included in the toponym formations in the RM are the lexemes of Turkish origin, such as *ada*, *dere*, *avlija*, *kran*, *kurt* etc., which are reflected in such toponyms as *Ada Deresi*, *Kesendre*, *Avliite*, *Jeli Kran*, *Kurt Tepe*, etc. The typical fact here is that the Turkish language had an influence not only at the lexical level but also at the grammar level. According to the Turkish “juxtaposing” model, many complex toponyms were established. In addition, there are Turkish suffixes for the plural (*-lar*) and the Turkish suffix *-lak/-lāk*, the genitive suffixes, etc.

We can conclude at the end that Macedonian toponymy, with its lexical and archaic heritage which, above all, is Slavic, is very rich. In Macedonian toponymy, apart from the highly present Slavic element, we can also find long-gone traces from the intensive historical and cultural intermingling of different peoples that have populated the region, that have cultivated the region but have also devastated this same region over the long period of history.

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