# ON THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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# ON THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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**In its origin and structural and typological characteristics the official language of the Republic of North Macedonia is a southwestern written regional norm of the Bulgarian language.** In support of this position a series of arguments of linguistic, historical and cultural nature can be adduced, all being based upon authentic sources and resulting from extensive research carried out by renowned Bulgarian and foreign scholars.

## I. BRIEF HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE ABOUT THE REGION OF MACEDONIA

The dialects of the Bulgarian language some of which, due to political reasons, have been turned into 'a language' – today the official written norm of the Republic of North Macedonia, have been present for centuries in the historical and geographical region of Macedonia. In line with modern understanding formed during the 19th–20th centuries, it is situated in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula and occupies a territory of 67,000 sq. km. In the Middle Ages and well until World War I, when the region had an evident Bulgarian ethnic and cultural character, its territory was even larger. It is mostly mountainous, with the Bistritsa, Vardar, and Cherni Drin rivers running through it. To the north Macedonia is flanked by the Shar, Skopska Crna Gora, Kozjak, Osogovo and Rila mountains, to the south it borders on the Bistritsa river and the Aegean Sea with the valleys of Salonica and Serres, to the west are Mount Korab, the mountain ranges of Jablanica, Gramos and Pindus, to the east are the western slopes of the Rhodopes. The large number of lakes, such as lakes Ohrid, Prespa, Dojran, Kostur (Greek Orestiada), Ostrov (Greek Vegoritida), and Lagadin (Greek Koroneia) lend a distinct character to the local landscape.

Today, the territory of the historical and geographical region of Macedonia is divided among six states: North Macedonia (aka Vardar Macedonia – approx. 37%); Bulgaria (aka Pirin Macedonia – approx. 11%), Greece (Aegean Macedonia, aka South Macedonia – approx. 50%), Albania (the regions of Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo (Alb. Gollobordë)), Kosovo (Gora) and Serbia (part of the Pchinja county). The inhabitants of the region are approx. 4,900,000, and today, despite the ethnic cleansings, resettlements, and repressions

in the course of the 20th century more than 40% are still of Bulgarian origin. Beside the Orthodox Bulgarians, who are the predominant element, there are also Catholics, Uniates, Protestants, and a large number of Bulgarian Muslims. The remaining part of the population in the region of Macedonia are Greeks (incl. emigrants from Asia Minor who moved over after World War I from the former Soviet Union and from other countries), Albanians, Vlachs and Aromanians, Turks, Roma, Jews, and a small number of Serbs.

In 1913, after the seizure of more than 80% of the region's territory by Greece and Serbia (subsequently Yugoslavia), the Macedonian Bulgarians were subjected to horrendous repressions, purposeful and violent change of language, names, and self-consciousness. The Bulgarians in Greece were declared "Slavic-speaking Greeks", in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia – "Southern Serbs" and in the aftermath of 1944 – "Macedonians". Until the eve of World War II, when the "invention" of the "Macedonian" language, nation and history was launched, the name "Macedonian" was first and foremost used as an appellation for an inhabitant of the historical and geographical region: a Macedonian Bulgarian, a Macedonian Vlach, a Macedonian Greek, etc. This is still the traditional meaning of the term today.

A sizeable part of the Bulgarians, who adopted Islam in the past (sometimes also known as "Torbeshi" or "Pomaks"), were influenced by the Turkish political and religious propaganda and emigrated to Turkey. That took place in several waves following World War I and World War II, and deeply affected the Bulgarian Muslims from the then Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece. The demographic explosion of the Albanian Muslims led to the assimilation of tens of thousands of Islamized Bulgarians. A substantial factor that influenced the decline in the Bulgarian population was also large-scale emigration to North America and Australia which was significant at the beginning of the 20th century, after World War I and especially after World War II.

There are Bulgarian inhabitants in Kosovo, too. Nowadays there are Muslim Gorani and Zhuptsi, and also serbified "Torlaks" in the vicinity of Prizren in the Albanian mountains, to the south in the direction of Drach (today's Durrës, Albania). There are still traces of Bulgarian pockets in Thessaly and Epirus.

During the Classical Antiquity the name "Macedonia" covered only the southern part of the region. With the territorial expansion of the ancient Macedonian state under its rulers Philip II and Alexander III

the Great it spread both northwards and eastwards. The name was finally affirmed by the Roman administrative system. During the Middle Ages, the macrotoponym "Macedonia" moved on and designated quite different territories. After the 7th–8th centuries it designated parts of Thrace centered round Adrianople (Edirne, Turkey), an area that was almost invariably part of Byzantium. That use of the name was kept well into the 15th century and in some sporadic cases even later.

During the Middle Ages, in the Byzantine sources the historical and geographical region of Macedonia was named "Slavinia", and following its accession to the Bulgarian state it started being referred to as the "the Third Part of the Bulgarian Tsardom" or the "Lower Lands of Ohrid". From the mid-9th century the name "Slavinia" disappeared from Byzantine sources. In an addendum to the Middle Bulgarian translation of Constantine Manasses's *Chronicle* a Bulgarian man of letters wrote that the Bulgarians, having crossed at Bdin (today's Vidin on the Danube), "first conquered the Lower Lands of Ohrid".

When in 1018 Emperor Basil II dubbed the Bulgar Slayer (Greek ὁ Βουλγαροκτόνος), invaded the western Bulgarian lands, he created the province (Greek θέμα, theme) of Bulgaria with Skopje as its center. In the 14th century, during the medieval Serbian rule of Macedonia, it was known as "Greek" (Byzantine) land or, alternatively, as "not a small part of the Tsardom of Bulgaria".

During the Late Middle Ages, and especially in the Modern period, the name "Macedonia" gradually returned to its original place: this was due mostly to the ancient, specifically Roman tradition, adopted in Western Europe. Modern cartography, travel writing, scientific literature, journalism, etc. definitively established the name and the place of Macedonia in the notions of mankind.

## II. ON THE HISTORY OF THE LINGUISTIC NORM IN MACEDONIA

**The first written Slavic language based on the translations of Cyril and Methodius was Old Bulgarian.**

Cyril and Methodius lived among the Bulgarian Slavs inhabiting the region of Salonica. They had a perfect command of the Slavic vernacular and used it in the translation of liturgical books for their mission to Great Moravia launched in 863.

The inclusion of the Slavic tribes in the bigger part of the historical and geographical region of Macedonia, west of the Struma river, into the Bulgarian Khanate, took place in the 830–840s. The fact that from the mid-9th century the name "Slavinia" which usually designated the areas populated by Slavic tribes mainly in Macedonia disappeared in the Byzantine sources, is of great importance. The names of the Slavic tribes had fallen into oblivion whereas the Byzantines started to designate them with the political name "Bulgarians", since the former became subjects of the Bulgarian rulers and inhabited the territory of the Bulgarian state. The Slavs under Bulgarian sovereign power and influence have been referred to scientifically with the technical historical terms "Bulgarian Slavs", or "Slavs from the Bulgarian group". The philological sciences, however, employ these terms to refer to the Slavs, who, after the dissolution of the South Slavic macrodialect, spoke a language with the specific **шт** (sht) and **жд** (zhd).

Constantine-Cyril created the first Slavic alphabet and translations based on the Salonica vernacular, a southeastern Bulgarian dialect. Therefore, ethnically the language of the two brothers from Salonica

was Old Bulgarian. It is characterized by **шт**, **жg** (in words such as *нощь* [noshtъ]*, пещь* [peshtъ]*, гражданинъ* [grazhdaninъ]*, рождeнъ* [rozhdenъ]), the broad enunciation of the jat vowel (**ѣ**) (in words such as *лѣто* [lěto]*, бѣлъ* [bělъ]*, млѣко* [mlěko]), etc. The descendants **шт** and **жg** of the Proto-Slavic clusters *kt', tj* and *dj* are found only in Bulgarian in words such as *нощ* [nosht]*, рождeн* [rozhden], etc. In the 9th century there was no evidence of any Macedonian descendants, different from their Bulgarian counterparts, which would prove the existence of another southern Slavic language in the areas around Salonica. Today's **ќ** [k'] and **ѓ** [g'] in parts of Macedonia reflect a later dialect peculiarity of the Bulgarian vernacular in the area.

According to linguists from the Republic of North Macedonia "V. Jagić considered that the origin of most of the Old Slavic manuscripts should be found precisely in Macedonia… V. Oblak stayed in South Macedonia and studied the vernacular of the villages in the vicinity of Salonica" (Bojkovska et al. 2008, 50). In fact, Vatroslav Oblak found that in the village of Suho, in the area of Salonica, the broad enunciation of the jat vowel (**ѣ**) was preserved, still in his study he referred to the population of the geographical region of Macedonia as "Bulgarian peasants" and "Macedonian Bulgarians"; nowhere is their language designated as "Macedonian".

A highly relevant piece of evidence of the Bulgarian character of the Slavic language in the written sources of the 9th–11th centuries is also present in the two-volume *Старобългарски речник* [Old Bulgarian Dictionary] compiled by linguists at the Institute for Bulgarian Language, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1999; 2009): 90% of the word samples presented in it have counterparts in the Bulgarian dialects, in the contemporary Bulgarian literary language or in Bulgarian geographical and personal names.

Thus, the only appropriate term for the language of the 9th–11th century manuscripts is ***Old Bulgarian language***. The term *Old Slavic/Slavonic language* used by foreign Slavists does not reflect the ethnic and state provenance and character of the first written Slavic language but rather highlights its international functions. The term *Old Macedonian language* cannot claim scientific legitimacy since, at that time, in the region of Macedonia, which was partly included in the Bulgarian Tsardom, and partly in Byzantium, dialects of the Bulgarian language were spoken. In recent publications of

Macedonian linguists *Old Macedonian* is the language from the 9th to the 18th centuries, whereas the 19th century marks the beginning of *Modern Macedonian,* yet, concommitantly, mention is made of *Old Slavic, Macedonian variant of the Church Slavic language* (Bojkovska et al. 2008), or the *Macedonian recension of the Church Slavonic language* (Ribarova (ed.), v. I 2006; v. II 2008–2009). **In fact, the literary norm of the Republic of North Macedonia was created in 1944–1945 and cannot claim an earlier history** (see below).

**The first Slavic alphabets were created for the Old Bulgarian language.**

The Glagolitic alphabet was the first Slavic and Bulgarian alphabet; it reflects the phonetic characteristics of the Old Bulgarian language. The Glagolitic alphabet was St. Cyril's brain child: he set up a new graphic system of the Salonica spoken variant of the Old Bulgarian language because in the then Greek alphabet there were no letters for **б [b]**, **ж [zh]**, **з [z]**, **ц [ts]**, **ч [ch]**, **ш [sh]**, **щ [sht]**, the back vowel **ъ** and the front vowel **ь**, the big and the small nasals (back and front nasal vowels **ѫ** and **ѧ**), the *jat* (standing for a sound in between *e* and *a,* with an open enunciation). The first Old Bulgarian translations of Cyril and Methodius were put down in the Glagolitic script. The latter was taken to Great Moravia and Pannonia by the two brothers, the first Teachers of the Slavs. The Glagolitic alphabet and the books written in it were blessed by Pope Hadrian II in Rome. Following Methodius's death in 885, his disciples Kliment, Naum and Angelarius took the alphabet and the written legacy back to Bulgaria. The Glagolitic script was the medium of writing in the Old Bulgarian literary centers of Pliska, Veliki Preslav and Ohrid.

The numerous Glagolitic inscriptions in Veliki Preslav, Ravna (district of Provadia), Murtaflar (North Dobrudzha, Romania), the oldest Glagolitic letters in the Golden Church of Tsar Simeon confirm



Glagolitic manuscript

the fact that the Glagolitic alphabet was used in Veliki Preslav, the capital of Bulgaria at that time, and in the remote northeastern parts of the country in the first half of the 10th century. The Glagolitic script was the original script of Konstantin Preslavski's (Constantine of Preslav) *Alphabet Prayer,* Chernorizets Hrabar's *On the Letters,* some of the works of Ioan Exarch, etc. These facts turn down the arguments of Macedonian linguists that the major difference of "the Macedonian recension of the Church Slavic language" is the predominant use of the Glagolitic script and the subsequent introduction of the Cyrillic ("the use of the Glagolitic script is linked with Macedonia"; "in Macedonia the Cyrillic script was more rarely used" (Bojkovska et al. 2008, 52).

The Cyrillic alphabet was the second Bulgarian alphabet whose origin was based on objective reasons related to the functions of the Bulgarian state. At that time, there was no Macedonian state to be in need of official records. The Cyrillic script, which came into existence at the end of the 9th century – the beginning of the 10th century in the territories of the First Bulgarian Tsardom, followed the pattern of the Glagolitic alphabet and expressed the phonetic characteristics of the Old Bulgarian language. It was the product of Bulgarian men of letters in Pliska and Veliki Preslav, and was generously supported by the Bulgarian royal institution.



Cyrillic manuscript

**Bulgaria saved the legacy of Cyril and Methodius and spread it among all Orthodox Slavs and also on the territory of present-day Romania.**

In Moravia the legacy of Cyril and Methodius was annihilated. The traces of it in European cultural history would have been invariably lost but for the intervention of the Bulgarian state. The disciples of Cyril and Methodius – Kliment, Naum and Angelarius, banished from Great Moravia, were welcomed and paid honors in Pliska where Knyaz (Prince) Boris (852–889) provided them with the congenial conditions for literary and educational activities. That was how the first scholarly center in Bulgaria, in Pliska and Preslav, was established.



*Prince Boris I Receives Kliment, Naum and Angelarius, Disciples of Cyril and Methodius.* Dimitar Gyudzhenov

In the vast Bulgarian state Knyaz (Prince) Boris established a second center of literary work: in 886 he sent Kliment to the region of Kutmichevitsa to set up schools there. In the School of Ohrid Kliment taught 3,500 disciples. In 893 he was ordained "first bishop in the Bulgarian language", as *St. Kliment's Vita Longa* attests. Such a rendition most precisely proves the appurtenance of both the Ohrid School and Kliment Ohridski (St. Clement of Ohrid) to the history of the Bulgarian language and letters. St. Kliment was given the bishop's chair of the region of "Drembitsa or Velika" (in Central or South Macedonia, or in the Western Rhodopes); Naum was sent by the

new Bulgarian ruler Simeon (893–927) to replace Kliment as teacher and organizer of literary activities in Ohrid. Bishop Kliment Ohridski and Naum, who took over his literary activities in Ohrid, were both prelates in the Bulgarian church. After 893 the new capital of Veliki Preslav, with the assistance of Tsar Simeon, became a flourishing center of literary activities. **Thus, two Bulgarian visionary rulers – Knyaz (Prince) Boris and Tsar Simeon – saved the legacy of Cyril and Methodius as a result of the former's consistent state policy and by giving the assistance, financial and legal support to Cyril and Methodius's disciples and their co-workers.** The eminent European and American Byzantologist and Slavist Francis Dvornik rightfully exclaimed: "The work of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, rejected by the West, was saved by the Bulgarians!"

After the conversion of Serbia to Christianity in the 9th century and of Kievan Rus' in the 10th century, Old Bulgarian manuscripts were carried over to those countries and, for centuries afterwards, they were used and copied. At the end of the 14th century, following the fall of Bulgaria under Ottoman rule, the works of the Tarnovo Literary School were taken to Wallachia, Moldova, Serbia and Russia. Old Bulgarian was the first literary language in medieval Europe based on a spoken vernacular in the 9th century. **In the 14th and 15th centuries the medieval Bulgarian literary language became the third classical language of Europe following Greek and Latin.**

# III. ON THE NAMES IN MACEDONIA

The study of names (onomastics) with its two major branches: **toponymy** *(the geographical names in general)* and **anthroponymy** *(personal, paternal, and last names)*, plays a major role in the history and the current state of any language and provides indisputable evidence of its character. The ancient languages in the Balkans have been reconstructed on the basis of various proper names (hydronyms, oikonyms, toponyms, and anthroponyms).

   *Hydronyms* are some of the earliest attested geographical names which, in their prevailing part, remain unchanged for centuries. Sometimes such denominations are the sole source for the language appurtenance of the population of a specific territory provided no other data is available. Prominent Bulgarian linguists have devoted some of their works to the study of river names within the Bulgarian boundaries (e.g. Stefan Mladenov, Vladimir Georgiev, Jordan Zaimov). One such study, Ivan Duridanov's *Die Hydronymie des Vardarsystems als Geschichtsquelle* [The Hydronymy of the Vardar System as a Historical Source] (Köln – Wien 1975), centers on the hydronymy of the Vardar basin and proves the Bulgarian origin of the prevalent part of the hydronyms which exemplify the lexical wealth of the Bulgarian language. The parallelisms the scholar adduces are from Old Bulgarian, Bulgarian dialectology, and onomastics. What is being preserved is priceless ancient data which is part of the creativity and the collective memory of the Bulgarians (e.g. the river names: *Рячица* [Ryachitsa]*, Вранещица* [Vraneshtitsa]).

   The study of the river names of the Struma basin employs comparative data of river names of the Vardar basin: these are examples of hydronyms which are not derivatives of toponyms, oikonyms, etc. (cf. Table 1), and are assumed to be relatively archaic.

   *The names of localities and settlements,* or toponyms, are of equally great importance in the characterization of the language. Their study yields important enthnogenetic conclusions since the toponyms, registered on the territory of any settlement, form part of its history and testify to the ethnicity that inhabited it, its language, popular customs and culture.

   The work of the Russian Slavist linguist Afanasii M. Selishchev on the Bulgarian population of Polog (the valley of Tetovo in the northwest of Macedonia), *Полог и его болгарское население*

**Table 1.** Comparison of river names in the basins of the rivers of Struma and Vardar

| Rivers in the basin of the river **Struma** | Rivers in the basin of the river **Vardar** |
|---|---|
| *Блато* [Blato] | *Blato* |
| *Бабин дол* [Babin dol] | *Babin dol* |
| *Бела(та) река* [Bela(ta) reka] | *Bela reka* |
| *Бистрица* [Bistritsa] | *Bistritsa* |
| *Брестница* [Brestnitsa] | *Brestnitsa* |
| *Буковец* [Bukovets] | *Bukov dol, Bukovitsa* |
| *Валявица* [Valyavitsa] | *Valyavitsa* |
| *Глозка (Глошка) река* [Glozka (Gloshka) reka] | *Gloshka reka* |
| *Горещица* [Goreshtitsa] | *Goreshtitsa* |
| *Градешница* [Gradeshnitsa] | *Gradeshnitsa* |
| *Дълбочишка река (< Дълбочица)* [Dalbochishka reka (<Dalbochitsa)] | *Dlabochitsa* |
| *Зли дол* [Zli dol] | *Zli dol* |
| *Калището* [Kalishteto] | *Kalishte* |
| *Каменица* [Kamenitsa] | *Kamenitsa* |
| *Конопница* [Konopnitsa] | *Konopnitsa* |
| *Кози дол* [Kozi dol] | *Kozi dol* |
| *Ломница* [Lomnitsa] | *Lomnitsa* |
| *Малечката речица* [Malechkata rechitsa] | *Malechka reka* |
| *Орлова река* [Orlova reka] | *Orleva reka* |
| *Раковица* [Rakovitsa] | *Rakovets, Rakovitsa* |
| *Студенец* [Studenets] | *Studenets* |
| *Тополница* [Topolnitsa] | *Topolnitsa* |
| *Черна река* [Cherna reka] | *Cherna reka* |

[Polog and Its Bulgarian Population] (in Russian) (Sofia 1929), provides ample data of oikonyms and toponyms. The outstanding Russian scholar dedicated a special study to the toponymy of Macedonia and its impact on dialectology. To illustrate the phonetic changes that had taken place he employed, as an example, the name of the village of *Радибуш* [Radibush] in the vicinity of Kriva palanka (in Northeastern Macedonia). The village is mentioned in a charter granted by the medieval Serbian ruler Stefan Dušan (1331–1355) issued in 1358 as *Радибоужда* [Radibouzhda]. The oikonym *Радибош* [Radibosh] occurs as such also in the vicinity of Radomir (in Western Bulgaria). The scholar also pointed out to the significance of the toponyms in the study of a specific language since they may occasionally remain isolated in the spoken language and keep an earlier sound pattern, not accounting for the changes in contemporary speech. He was right to claim that toponymy is "one of the sources for the history of the Slavic vernaculars in Macedonia" and briefly defined several linguistic features based on oikonyms and toponyms:

1) In the earliest written registers of oikonyms there are examples such as *Пешт* [Pesht]*, Доброште* [Dobroshte]*, Гражданик* [Grazhdanik]*, Л'убижда* [Lyubizhda]*, Торажда* [Torazhda]*, Селогражде* [Selograzhde] which have preserved the sound clusters *шт* [sht]*, жд* [zhd] – distinctive features of the Bulgarian language area. The same applies to the toponyms: *Желегош* [Zhelegosh] < *Желегожде* [Zhelegozhde]*, Мислегож* [Mislegozh] < *Мислегождже* [Mislegozhdzhe] (Kostur (Greek Kastoria)); *Радожда* [Radozhda]*, Делогожда* [Delo-

ПОЛОГ

и

ЕГО БОЛГАРСКОЕ НАСЕЛЕНИЕ

ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ, ЭТНОГРАФИЧЕСКИЕ И ДИАЛЕКТОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОЧЕРКИ СЕВЕРО-ЗАПАДНОЙ МАКЕДОНИИ

(С ЭТНОГРАФИЧЕСКОЮ КАРТОЮ ПОЛОГА)

ПРОФ. А. М. СЕЛИЩЕВА

СОФИЯ
ИЗДАНИЕ МАКЕДОНСКОГО НАУЧНОГО ИНСТИТУТА
1929

Afanasii M. Selishchev. Polog and Its Bulgarian Population (in Russian). Sofia, 1929
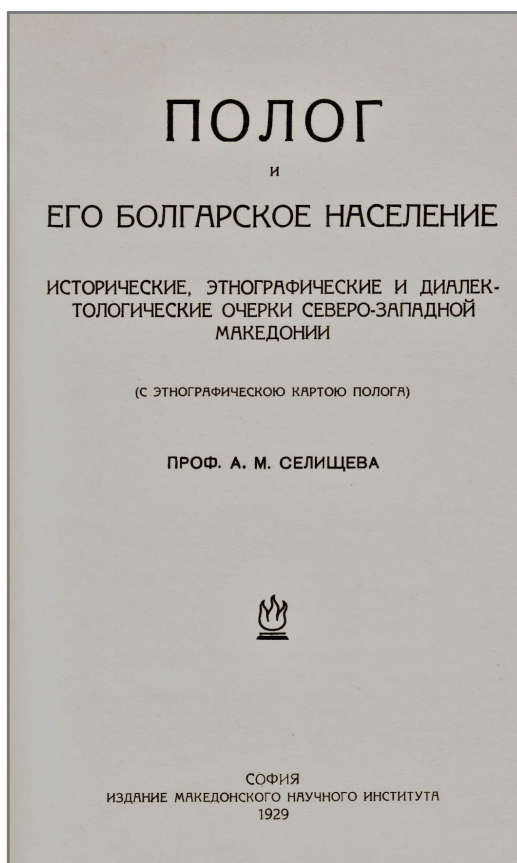
gozhda] (Ohrid); *Граждено* [Grazhdeno] (Prespa); *Кривогащани* [Krivogashtani], *Радуща* [Radushta], *Пещани* [Peshtani] (Prilep); *Драгош* [Dragosh] < *Драгощь* [Dragoshtъ] (Bitola); *Рожден* [Rozhden] (Tikves); *Пештерица* [Peshteritsa], *Побѫжда* [Pobõzhda] (Skopje); *Бащево* [Bashtevo] (Kriva Palanka).

2) The toponyms can take an article as they do on the whole Bulgarian language territory: *Градот* [Gradot], *Кръстот* [Krastot], *Ножот* [Nozhot], *Скокот* [Skokot], *Главите* [Glavite], *Сливите* [Slivite] (Tikves).

By way of conclusion, the Russian scholar stated that *"in its lexical aspect the toponymy of Macedonia manifests closest proximity with the toponymy of Bulgaria."*

Afanasii M. Selishchev focused specifically also on family names (patronymics), by stating explicitly that they are formed with *-ов* [-ov], *-ов-ьци* [-ov-ъtsi], *-ев-ьци* [-ev-ъtsi], and drew the conclusion: *"**так и в Болгарии**"* ["the same as in Bulgaria"]: *Стайковци* [Staykovtsi] (Skopje), *Гърдановци* [Gardanovtsi], *Единаковци* [Edinakovtsi] (Bitola), *Трайковци* [Traykovtsi], *Димовци* [Dimovtsi], *Поповци* [Popovtsi], *Хаджиовци* [Hadzhiovtsi].

Jordan Zaimov studied the Bulgarian oikonyms in his work on the settlement of Bulgarian Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula (1967). The analysis of oikonyms, deriving from originally residents' names ending with *-ане/-яне* [-ane/-yane]; *-евци/-овци* [-evtsi/-ovtsi], further substantiates the argument of Afanasii M. Selishchev about the surnames in Macedonia. The most archaic are considered the names ending in *-яне* [-yane]: *Лясковияне* [Lyaskoviyane] 1277 (Bitola); *Биждане* [Bizhdane] (Ohrid); *Радишане* [Radishane], the 15th c., *Студенчане* [Studenchane], *Грачане* [Grachane] (Skopje); *Бояне* [Boyane], *Еловяне* [Elovyane], *Каменяне* [Kamenyane] (Tetovo); *Буковяне* [Bukovyane], *Жегляне* [Zheglyane] (Kumanovo); *Комарьчьне/Комарьчяне* [Komarchyane], 1337 (Prilep). On the basis of ample language data from the contemporary and historical Bulgarian lands Jordan Zaimov drew the following conclusion: **"The Macedonian dialects and the residents' names in Macedonian toponymy are the most conservative and archaic elements in the Bulgarian language and the Bulgarian toponymy".**

The Christian and last names (the anthroponyms) display identical features in their development throughout the entire Bulgarian language territory. Christian names received proper attention by

Afanasii M. Selishchev in the afore-mentioned work on the region of Polog in Northwestern Macedonia. He views the Christian names of the population in the area as predominantly ancient Slavic and Christian calendar ones. As ancient Slavic names he mentioned: *Боудимир* [Boudimir], *Витомирь* [Vitomirъ], *Гоиславь* [Goislavъ], *Дабиживь* [Dabizhivъ], *Десиславь* [Desislavъ], *Доброта* [Dobrota], *Прибиславь* [Pribislavъ], *Радота* [Radota], etc. Today, these names are part of the personal name system of the Bulgarians, or they can be found still preserved in Bulgarian micro toponyms. Rich collections of Bulgarian personal names preserved in *pomeniks*[1] at the monasteries of Matka, near Skopje, Slepche, near Bitola, and Treskavets, near Prilep, are found in another of Afanasii M. Selishchev's works, *Македонские кодики XVI – XVIII веков* [Macedonian Codices of the 16th–18th centuries] (in Russian) (Sofia 1933).

Following World War I, the Serbian government launched an active assimilatory policy in Vardar Macedonia, ***the change of the surnames*** being part of it. The codification of the surnames ending in *-ić* was introduced, but the measure failed. After 1945 the new Yugoslav communist authorities started implementing the codification of the surnames ending in *-ski*. The codification was not implemented only in some southeastern parts (Strumitsa, Tikves, Stip), and in those parts the surnames have remained ending predominantly in *-ov/-ev*. The ruling circles in Belgrade and Skopje cherished the hope that the residents of Vardar Macedonia would get increasingly estranged from Bulgarians and their Bulgarian identity would be obliterated as a result. It is worth mentioning that the Bulgarian surnames are mostly formed with the suffix *-ov/-ev,* and also *-in* and *-sk(i)*. The Bulgarian surnames ending in *-ski* are formed from an earlier kin or resident name, and as well as from sobriquets and nicknames. Trajko Stamatoski, an onomast from Yugoslav Macedonia, claimed that „презименскиот модел на *-ски* е голема специфика на македонската антропонимија. Таа е антропонимиски знак за националната припадност...“ [the surname pattern ending in *-ski* is a genuine feature of Macedonian anthroponymy. It is an anthroponymic sign of national appurtenance...] These claims of the linguist do not correspond to the scientific truth.

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[1] A *pomenik* is a list of personal names usually kept in Orthodox churches and monasteries, and read as part of prayers for health at big religious feasts. (Translator's note – V.F.)

At the turn of the century, a two-volume dictionary of surnames *(презиминя)* was published in the Republic of Macedonia. The authors pointed out that the dictionary includes the surnames of only those **citizens who explicitly identify themselves as Macedonians**. The dictionary lists surnames formed on the same base and ending both with the suffixes *-ov/-ev* and *-ski.* Together with the forcibly imposed model of the formation of surnames ending in *-ski* the more pristine forms ending in *-ov/-ev* are also preserved in Macedonia. This comes as evidence of the exceptional proximity and kinship with the Bulgarian surnames. Herein are some examples from the dictionary: *Алексов/Алексоска* [Aleksov/Aleksoska, *-i*]*, Ампов/ Амповски* [Ampov/Ampovski]*, Андрејчин* [Andreychin]*, Асенов* [Asenov]*, Аспарухов* [Asparuhov]*, Бадев* [Badev]*, Баев/Баевска* [Baev/Baevska]*, Борисов/Борисовски* [Borisov/Borisovski]*, Бошков/Бошковски* [Boshkov/Boshkovski]*, Виденов/Виде- ски* [Videnov/Videski]*, Гребенаров/Гребенароски* [Grebenarov/ Grebenaroski]*, Заберски* [Zaberski]*, Иванчев* [Ivanchev]*, Игов/ Иговски* [Igov/Igovski]*, Јовева/Јовевска* [Yoveva/Yovevska]*, Ке- римитчиев* [Kerimitchiev]*, Конев/Конески* [Konev/Koneski]*, Ко- чев/Кочевски* [Kochev/Kochevski]*, Мирчев/Мирчески* [Mirchev/ Mircheski]*, Мостров* [Mostrov]*, Орачев/Орачески* [Orachev/ Oracheski]*, Пасков/Пасковски* [Paskov/Paskovski]*, Пецов/Пе- цовски* [Petsov/Petsovski]*, Пешев/Пешевски* [Peshev/Peshevski]*, Плачков/Плачковски* [Plachkov/Plachkovski]*, Ризов/Ризовски* [Rizov/Rizovski]*, Робев/Робевски* [Robev/Robevski]*, Стојанов/ Стојановски* [Stoyanov/ Stoyanovski] (the most popular name in the Republic of North Macedonia)*, Сугарев/Сугаревски* [Sugarev/ Sugarevski]*, Тодев/Тодевски* [Todev/Todevski]*, Чолев/Чолевски* [Cholev/Cholevski]*, Шаламанов/Шаламановски* [Shalamanov/ Shalamanovski]*, Шалев/Шалевски* [Shalev/Shalevski]*, Шуманов/ Шумановски* [Shumanov/Shumanovski].

**Even nowadays virtually every single surname recorded in this dictionary is either found, or has a counterpart in the Bulgarian system of anthroponyms**.

# IV. THE SLAVIC STUDIES DISCOVER THE BULGARIAN LANGUAGE

At the beginning of the 19th century information about the Bulgarians and their language was meager in the studies published abroad and the interest shown in them was hardly noteworthy. However, with the beginning of the debate about the motherland of the first Slavic literary language, which Slavistics, right from its inception, viewed as common legacy of all Slavic peoples, things began changing rapidly. The first Slavists had at their disposal only 27 folk songs from the area near Razlog; they were published by the Serbian scholar of folklore Vuk Karadžić in his historic *Догатак к Санктпетербургским сравнительним рјечницима свују језика и наречија: с особитим огледима* **бугарског језика** [Appendix to the Saint Petersburg Comparative Dictionaries of All Languages and Dialects with Special Reference to **the Bulgarian Language**] (in Serbian) (Vienna 1822). Accompanied with brief information about the grammar of the Bulgarian language, the songs became the latter's first passport as a separate Slavic language in the newly established science of Slavistics. Having at his disposal only those songs and scant information coming from travelling Bulgarian merchants from the southwestern Bulgarian parts, the Slovak-Czech scholar Pavel Šafarik first surmised that that language should most probably be the oldest Slavic language. That marked the beginning of the scientific interest in the Bulgarians, their language, literature and culture. In his *History of the Slavic Language and Literature by All Vernaculars* (Pest 1826) Pavel Šafarik spared only three pages to Bulgarian literature but they happened to be significant for they were the source of the first information, incomplete and partially incorrect as it was, about a nation still enslaved. Pavel Šafarik was only wrong about the population size of Bulgarians as he wrote that ***"the Bulgarian vernacular is used in Bulgaria and Macedonia by about half a million Slavs"***. Shortly afterwards, in many of his letters to other scholars, he added two more million people to Bulgarians and separated the Bulgarian language from Serbian, the former seen as independent with two major dialects – eastern and western. The scholar wholeheartedly rejected the thesis of the author of the Pannonian theory Jernej Kopitar about the Slovene origin of Cyril and Methodius. In a letter from 1827 focusing on the issue of

the work of the two brothers, Šafarik claimed in full earnest that *"the alphabet and the language are Slav-Bulgarian"*. In the dispute about the language and the motherland of Cyril and Methodius, at a time when the ethnic origin of Bulgarians was not clear yet, Pavel Šafarik's position was one of integrity and objectivity: the Bulgarians speak a Slavic language and it is the first Slavic literary language. In his other notable work, *Slavic Ethnography* (Prague 1842), the language was definitely posited as *Old Bulgarian*.

From among the first Russian Slavists it was only Viktor Grigorovich who succeeded in reaching the Bulgarian lands, difficult to acces at that time. His contribution to the history of the Bulgarian language is monumental: he discovered and described old Glagolitic and Cyrillic manuscripts; he himself selected on the spot the informants about the Bulgarian language and folklore material from Macedonia and Eastern Bulgaria, which shed new light on the history, language and culture of the Bulgarians; he published *Очерк путешествия по Европейской Турции* [Outline of a Journey Through European Turkey] (Kazan 1848) which is still in use by Slavists; it provided the first credible data about the southwestern Bulgarian parts (Voden (Greek Edessa), Bitola, Ohrid, Struga, and Stip), i.e. it revealed to the world the then unknown Slavic South; it recognized the Glagolitic alphabet as the work of St. Cyril.

Almost 40 years after Pavel Šafarik came up with the hypothesis that the Old Bulgarian language had as its basis the vernacular of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the interest of European scholars in the dialect of the Salonica region was drawn by a report in *Savetnik* Newspaper which abounded in examples of preserved nasality (e.g. *зъмп* [zəmp] instead of *зъб* [zəb]) (7 Oct. 1863). The presence of preserved nasal vowels in the Bulgarian dialects has become the most relevant linguistic feature which defines them straightforwardly as direct descendants of the language of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. In fact, way back in 1846, in his book *О языке церковнославянском, его начал, образователях и исторических судьбах* [On the Church Slavonic Language, Its Beginning, Founders and Historical Destiny] (in Russian), published in Odessa, the Russian scholar Konstantin Zelenetskij, basing himself on preserved nasality, posited that "Cyril and Methodius translated the Holy Scriptures in a Bulgarian dialect", but as he failed to identify his sources, his assertion found no response. The publications by Bulgarian scholars about

Macedonia that followed the *Savetnik* report stirred interest in the dialects of the villages there. In 1888, in *Русский филологический вестник* [Russian Philological Newspaper] (Moscow) the Russian scholar Petar Draganov published data of the Salonica dialect in the village of Zarovo. The Croatian Slavist Vatroslav Jagić, member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, decided to send his best prepared student, Slovene Vatroslav Oblak, to the domain of Old Bulgarian and the South Slavic languages to collect on the spot authentic data and give a valid statement about the motherland and the national appurtenance of the language of Cyril and Methodius. Vatroslav Oblak did not wholly succeed in completing the description of the Salonica dialect, the task of his expedition, but he managed to collect data of the genuine Salonica dialect from only one informant; in this respect, the expedition's objective was fulfilled. In his notes the Slovene scholar described the manner in which he took his notes: "I identified the characteristic features of the vernacular of Suho in my lodging as I interviewed a worker from Suho who had left his native village exactly a year before and had not been anywhere else either in Macedonia or Bulgaria. He had never attended a Bulgarian school and thus his speech was free from any influence of literary Bulgarian or any other Bulgarian dialect. As far as Greek was concerned, he knew the vernacular spoken in Suho… The dialect in the northern part of the region of Salonica I studied on the spot and my notes were taken there."

Prior to the publication of his *Macedonische Studien* (Wien 1896) and *Принос към българската граматика* [Contribution to Bulgarian Grammar] (Sofia 1894), the young scholar wrote detailed letters to his teacher Vatroslav Jagić, wherein he enthusiastically noted: "It is up to only a few more fragments of the declension and to a bit of stronger imagination, and, in the dialect of Suho, the language of Cyril and Methodius would have been found." These words, written in all scientific earnestness, categorically invalidate the Pannonian theory about the character of the Old Bulgarian language and prove the origin of the Bulgarian language. In all his scholarly *oeuvres* the Slovene scholar mentioned only *"Macedonian Bulgarians"* and *"Bulgarians in Macedonia"*. He explicitly pointed out that at that time the controversy was whether Bulgarians or Serbs lived in Macedonia, and nowhere did he mention any "Macedonian population" or "Macedonians" speaking "Macedonian language".

# V. ON THE BULGARIAN MEN OF LETTERS FROM MACEDONIA DURING THE REVIVAL PERIOD

The modern Bulgarian literary language emerged during the Bulgarian Revival Period (18th–19th centuries) as a result of the complex process of the Bulgarian nation formation. **There is no evidence whatsoever that during that period a process of formation of a separate, "Macedonian" literary language was underway.** Data suggests that the necessary preliminary conditions were missing:

  – there was no recorded literary history and written tradition of any "Macedonian" language;

  – there was no ethnic community that could be a native speaker of such a language, neither in its spoken, nor in its written form;

  – there was no non-Bulgarian dialect foundation upon which a separate literary language, different from Bulgarian, could be formed.

  At the same time, however, there is ample evidence, both historical and linguistic, that in the process of formation of a united literary language for all Bulgarians, writers from Macedonia took an active part. Macedonia was also the home region of the most ardent champions of a well-structured literary Bulgarian language for education and liturgical services in the mother tongue. Prominent figures of the Bulgarian Revival Period including Yoakim Karchovski, Paisiy Hilendarski, Konstantin Miladinov and Dimitar Miladinov, Rayko Zhinzifov, Yordan Hadzhikonstantinov–Dzhinot, Grigor Parlichev, Kuzman Shapkarev, etc. articulately voiced their Bulgarian idenity. The language of their works, similarly to that of their counterparts in other Bulgarian regions, is characterized by a constant pursuit of a common Bulgarian foundation and the use, typical of the period, of specific dialect elements. The attempts in Skopje to question their Bulgarian national appurtenance and present them as forefathers of "Macedonian" literature are fully groundless and contradict historical facts. The truth is that those writers created literature in their mother tongue, which they invariably regarded as Bulgarian, and actively participated in the disputes about the ways and means of the latter's literary improvement. The very texts they authored serve as evidence for this.

  Herein some examples are enclosed:

**Yoakim Karchovski** (c. 1750 – c. 1820) was born in the village of Oslomey, the county of Kicevo, the western part of today's Republic of North Macedonia. He was a clergyman, a teacher and a man of letters, an adherent of the author of the first book printed in modern Bulgarian (*Nedelnik*) Bishop Sofroniy Vrachanski, a champion of the Bulgarian literary language based on the vernacular of its native speakers. Inspired by the idea that the written language should be accessible since it is the most powerful means of the dissemination of knowledge, he published several books on religious topics and he himself explicitly stated that they were written in "***простейший язик болгарский***" [the simplest Bulgarian language]. In his works he introduced the literary use of features of the spoken language, spread throughout the whole Bulgarian language territory, and amalgamated them with features characteristic of the written tradition. He opted for a broad dialect base of the literary language, using mostly features characteristic of the southwestern Bulgarian dialects, being best familiar with them, yet he included some features from the eastern dialects, too.

**Dimitar Miladinov** (1810–1862) was born in the town of Struga, on Lake Ohrid. He was a teacher and a champion of an independent Bulgarian church. He introduced teaching of Bulgarian to the schools in the southwestern Bulgarian regions and contributed significantly to the development of the education cause that proved of utmost importance for the consolidation of the Bulgarian national identity and the formation of the literary language under the conditions of the Greek cultural influence which he fought against. Together with his brother Konstantin Miladinov, he compiled and published in Zagreb a collection of *Български народни песни* [Bulgarian Folk Songs] (1861). The Bulgarian national identity of the brothers from Struga was unequivocally supported in a letter of gratitude to the Croatian Catholic priest Josip Strossmayer who assisted the publication of the collection. The letter noted that Strossmayer had "deigned to turn attention to the ***southernmost Slavs Bulgarians***" (Bosilkov et al. 1983).

The Russian scholar Viktor Grigorovich, who was sent to study the language of the population inhabiting the Bulgarian lands, commissioned Dimitar Miladinov to write a grammar of "the currently spoken Bulgarian language" based on records of Bulgarian folk songs. In a letter to Viktor Grigorovich, Dimitar Miladinov wrote:
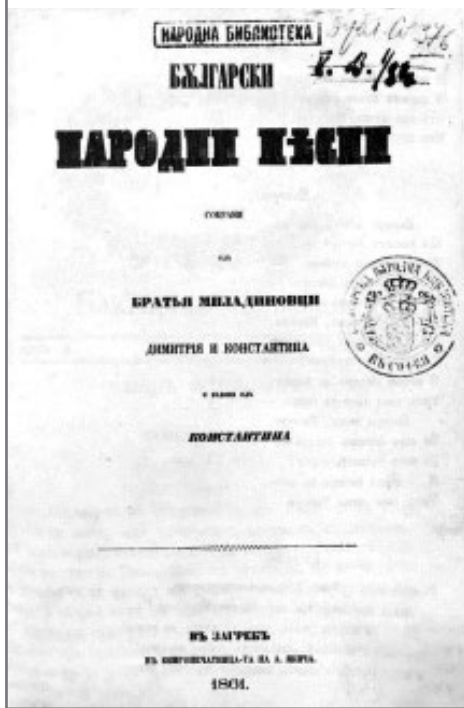
*"Meanwhile my efforts dedicated to our Bulgarian language and the Bugarian folk songs to meet your requirements are extraordinary"* (Dinekov (ed.) 1969).

**Parteniy Zografski** (1818–1876) was born in Galichnik, the western part of today's Republic of North Macedonia. He was a clergyman, a man of letters, a teacher and an active champion of the church independence of the Bulgarian people. In his capacity as a Bishop of Kukush (Kilkis in Southern Macedonia, today's Greece) and Dojran (the southeastern part of today's Republic of North Macedonia), subsequently of Pirot (in today's Southeastern Serbia) he fought for the introduction of religious services in Church Slavic (a Russian phonetic variant of Old Bulgarian) in the churches and supported the Bulgarian educational cause. He became actively involved in the discussions on the character of the modern Bulgarian literary language and his seminal article *Мисли за болгарскиот язик* [Reflections on the Bulgarian Language] (in the journal of *Български книжици* [Bulgarian Writings], Constantinople 1858, No. 1) argued for the codification of the language based on its major dialects. Here is how Parteniy Zografski viewed the dialect division of the Bulgarian language: "*…нашио язикъ се разделяват на две*

*главни наречия, на горноболгарско и долноболгарско; първото се говорат в България, в Тракия и някои части в Македония; а пак другото в Македония вообще, или стара Болгария*" [… our language is divided in two major dialects, Upper Bulgarian and Lower Bulgarian; the former is spoken in Bulgaria, in Thrace, and in some parts of Macedonia; the latter – in Macedonia in general, i.e. in Old Bulgaria"] (*Цариградски вестник* [Constantinople Newspaper] Year 7, 1857, No. 315).

**Natanail Ohridski and Plovdivski** (1820–1906) was born in the village of Kuchevishte, the county of Skopje. He was a clergyman, the first Metropolitan of the Bulgarian Exarchate in Ohrid (1874–1877), an opponent of the Greek religious oppression, one of the founders of the Bulgarian Learned Society (1869) and its full member. Natanail Ohridski is the author of *Буквар славено-български* [Slav-Bulgarian Primer] (1865); he translated polemical treatises from Church Slavic to *"simple and succinct Bulgarian language"*. In *Зерцало или огледало християнское* [Mirror or Christian Reflections] he stated: "Желаим да покажим пример безкористный за обогащението и приведението на българската писменост" ["I want to give an impartial example for the enrichment and unification of Bulgarian writing]; he himself claimed to be translating "отъ славяно-Россійская на болгарский язык" [form Slav-Russian to the Bulgarian language]; he *"Bulgarized"*, as he put it, major texts on Christian topics to serve the needs of the educational process.

Konstantin Jireček gave one of the most touching characteristics of Natanail. On his arrival in Sofia, he visited him in his village cottage. There he found guests from Prilep and Ohrid who told him that in Macedonia the Turkish language was hardly used; the Vlachs, the Albanians and even some of the Turks used Bulgarian. In his capacity as a Minister of Education Konstantin Jireček supported the Bulgarian education cause in oppressed Macedonia with the help of Natanail Ohridski; their correspondence affirms that this was the path to follow and if it was to be followed consistently, "навярно можеме да кажеме, че всецяла Македония и по народност, и по язик и по писменост ще си остане наша навсегда от сръбски предели по река Бистрица и Солунско, и Егейско море, и от Дрин река до оконечности Доспата при всичките усилия на сърбизма и еллинизма" [most probably we can say that the whole of Macedonia, both in terms of its language and writing, will remain

ours for good, stretching from the Serbian border down the Bistritsa river basin and the region of Salonica and the Aegean Sea, and from the Drin River to Dospat despite all the efforts of the Serbian and Greek propaganda]. As a result of the cooperation between the two, the Statutes of the Bulgarian Schools in Macedonia were drawn up.

Natanail Ohridski finished his life as a Metropolitan of Plovdiv within the Bulgarian Exarchate (1891–1906).

**Yordan Hadzhikonstantinov–Dzhinot** (1818–1882) was born in the town of Veles, on the Vardar River, the central part of today's Republic of North Macedonia. He was a teacher, poet and collector of Old Bulgarian manuscripts. In the spirit of Enlightenment ideas he pointed out to the need for education in the native Bulgarian language: "болгарин е должен првo свой язик да учи" [the Bulgarian is duty-bound to learn his own language first]. In his testament, he passionately exclaimed: "***Аз съм Болгарин***, плачем за нашите изгубени болгаре, които са во долна Мисия, затова должни сме да ся жертвуваме за бракята наши пресладки болгари" ["***I am a Bulgarian,*** I weep for our lost brother Bulgarians, who are in Lower Moesia, and this is why it is our duty to sacrifice ourselves for the brothers, the best of our Bulgarians"]. In some 40 of his works published in periodicals nowhere did he use the word "Macedonian" as an ethnic concept, nor did he use the phrase "Macedonian language". Instead, he used more than 160 times the ethnonym "българин" [Bulgarian] with the variants "болгарин", "бугарин", as well as "македонски българи" [Macedonian Bulgarians]. He used the name "Македония" [Macedonia] as a denomination of part of the Bulgarian ethnic territory. The name "България" [Bulgaria] (and "Болгария") was used 52 times, whereas the adjective "болгарски" [Bulgarian] – 155 times.

**Grigor Parlichev** (1830–1893) was born in Ohrid, on Lake Ohrid. A winner of a prestigious competition for Greek poetry, Grigor Parlichev declined all the benefits in order to devote himself to the struggle for the introduction of the Bulgarian mother tongue to teaching in the schools of Ohrid, Salonica and in other towns in Macedonia, and of the Church Slavic as the liturgical language replacing Greek. In his *Автобиография* [Autobiography] (Sofia 1894) he wrote that to the question of the Athenian university authorities "What is your nationality?" he had answered, *"I am Bulgarian".* To the proposal to be sent to Oxford or Berlin to continue his studies on a Greek government scholarship, he responded: "I feel the great

need to go back home [to Ohrid]". His whole life was an example of selfless patriotism. He stood up to the century old authority of the Constantinople Oecumenical Patriarchate and opposed the policy of Greece seeking inclusion of other Christian peoples through the study of the Greek language, and contributed "in speech and in deed", as he put it, to the growing national awareness of the Bulgarians in Macedonia. Grigor Parlichev wrote: "Дотолкова *ние, българете*, сме били ругани и презрени от всите народности, чтомо време е вече да се опомним" ["Since *we, the Bulgarians*, have been so much reviled and despised by all the nationalities, it is now time for us to come to our senses"].

Grigor Parlichev was the first translator of *The Iliad* from ancient Greek to Bulgarian. He skillfully incorporated in the translation ancient features of the Ohrid dialect lending them the status of poetic means of expression along with the already established eastern Bulgarian features of the literary language. The poet made an exceptional contribution to the enrichment of the means of expression of the literary style of the Bulgarian language.

**Kuzman Shapkarev** (1834–1909) was born in Ohrid. As a teacher, he introduced the teaching of Bulgarian language and Bulgarian history in many towns in Macedonia. For the purposes of his activities he wrote several textbooks whose titles speak volumes of his national appurtenance: *Български буквар* [Bulgarian Primer] (Constantinople 1868), *Голяма българска читанка* [A Big Bulgarian Reader] (Constantinople 1868), etc. He was one of the first Bulgarian folklorists and ethnographers, member of the Bulgarian Learned Society; his works unequivocally provide evidence of the patriotism of a genuine Bulgarian. He is the author of: *Материали за историята на възраждането българщината в Македония от 1854 до 1884 г.* [Materials for the History of the Revival of the Bulgarian Spirit in Macedonia from 1854 to 1884] (in Bulgarian) (1884), *Сборник от български народни умотворения* [Miscellanea of Bulgarian Folklore Works] (in Bulgarian) (in 4 vols.) (1891–1894), etc. When persuading the Bulgarian government of the need to publish the *Miscellanea* Kuzman Shapkarev stressed the fact that the latter's publication would illuminate the scholars of the Slavic world on *"the indisputability of our right in relation to these Macedonian parts which are most often subject to claims by the neighboring Serbs and Greeks"* (Bosilkov et al. 1983). He is the author of a valuable collection of 2200 words
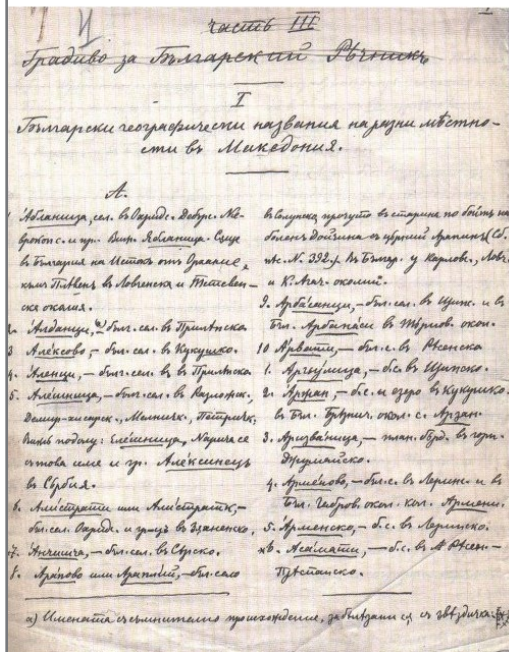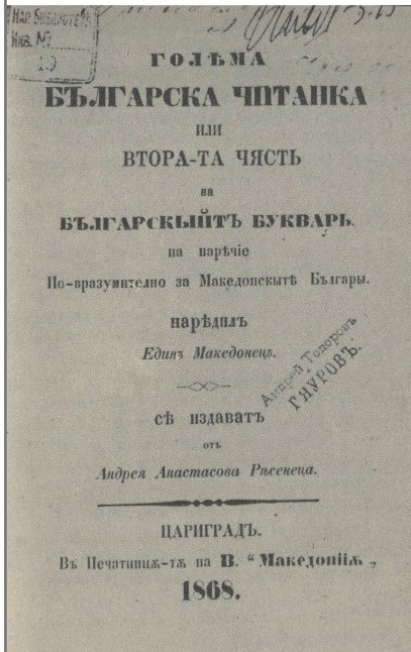
garnered in *Градиво за български речник* [Materials for a Bulgarian Dictionary] (in Bulgarian) (Shapkarev 2001). In the Preface to the first part of his *Miscellanea* he wrote: "… our language is not merely alive and active for the people speaking it; it is also more flexible and richer than many other present-day ones, highly adulated for their wealth (…) Due to various circumstances of temporary nature its various particles have remained scattered throughout our nation in **the vast fatherland of Bulgaria, Thrace and Macedonia**, and, thus, imperceptibly, with the passing of centuries, several Bulgarian variants and subvariants have been formed… Therefore, in order to establish a solid and rich, unified and homogeneous language, Bulgarian, out of them, as it was in times of yore, it is necessary to garner its scattered material even from the remotest of corners where there is Bulgarian population." (Shapkarev 1891, XVIII).

**Marko Tsepenkov** (1829–1920) was born in Prilep, the southern part of today's Republic of North Macedonia. He wrote in his autobiography: "Eternal memory I want to leave/ to **my dear Bulgarian people**" (Sofia 1896).

In order to "invent" a non-existent theory of a certain "Macedonian language", the authorities in Skopje regularly misrepresent the

Original cover of the collection of Stefan Verković *Folk Songs of the Macedonian Bulgarians* (1860)
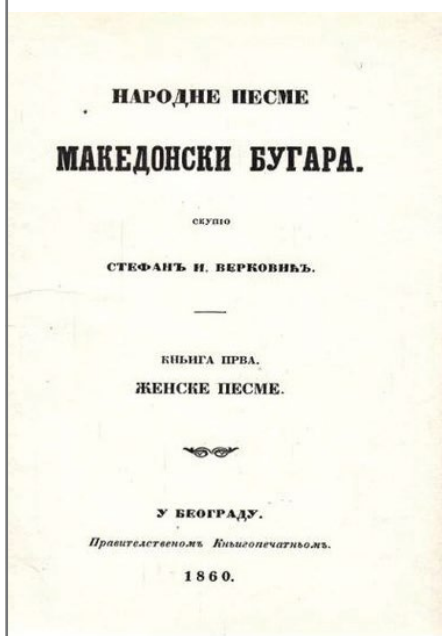


Cover of the same collection of Stefan Verković published in Skopje in 1961 – *Macedonian Folk Songs*

national and linguistic consciousness of eminent Bulgarian figures of the Revival Period who were born in places on the territory of present-day Republic of North Macedonia. Nowadays, these Bulgarian patriots are proclaimed by our neighboring country as builders of the "Macedonian" literary language: a claim that has nothing to do with historical truth and is in fact a gross falsification. Their work is claimed to be part of the history of Macedonian literature. Their books are remade to expunge words and expressions such as "Bulgarians" and "Macedonian Bulgarians". For example, the collection *Bulgarian Folk Songs* by the Miladinov brothers, published in Zagreb in 1861, was republished in Skopje with a forged title *Зборник за народни песни* [A Collection of Folk Songs] (1968). A point was reached when books of other authors too were published with forged titles that had originally included the words "Bulgarian" or "Bulgarians". Thus, the title of Stefan Verković's collection *Народне песме македонски бугара* [Folk Songs of the Macedonian Bulgarians] (1860) was turned into *Македонски народни песни* [Macedonian Folk Songs] in its 1961 Skopje edition. The sole purpose of such acts has been the obliteration of the Bulgarian historical and collective memory and building a new Macedonian national identity in its place.

The literary language unlike the dialects serves the communication of the national communities; hence it possesses a unity of norms.

This unity represents the ultimate goal of the Bulgarian spiritual elite from the entire Bulgarian ethnic territory. The purposeful selection and consolidation of these norms (i.e. the codification) are conducted through grammars and dictionaries. During the Revival Period, 25 grammars by Bulgarian and foreign authors were published (together with the republished ones their number exceeds 50), and they all described the norms of the Bulgarian language. Most of them served as textbooks and were used in all Bulgarian schools during the Revival Period.

When after 1878 the Macedonian regions inhabited by Bulgarians remained outside the borders of free Bulgaria, it was the school as an institution which kept up the use of the Bulgarian literary language at a time of highly adverse historical circumstances. It was due to the efforts of the local intelligentsia and the Bulgarian Exarchate that a plan was set up aiming at the reconstruction and the consolidation of the educational process in the Macedonian regions. According to a report by Exarch Yosif from 1902 the Bulgarian schools in the region numbered 729.

Before the Liberation War (1877–1878) more than 40 dictionaries were compiled (either manuscripts or printed). They were mainly bilingual or multilingual, providing the translation equivalents between words in Bulgarian and languages such as Greek, Turkish, French, German, Russian and English. It is worth pointing out that **in the titles of the grammars and the dictionaries of the Revival Period the mandatory words and expressions are *Bulgarian language, Slav-Bulgarian language;* the expression *Macedonian language* is nowhere to be found**. That was because such a language did not exist, a fact reflected in the lack of grammars and dictionaries to codify a literary norm different from the Bulgarian one.

**The review of the historical sources and the language data proves that the "Macedonian language" proclaimed as official in the Republic of North Macedonia does not have any of the main features of a national literary language**. Its existence is faced with skepticism since it is not a result of natural language development but is rather a political product of an ideology of the recent past, which has already been denounced. Its recent creation on the basis of the Bulgarian literary language by purposeful distancing from it rests on subjectivism and unprincipled language engineering mixed with a strong political bias.

# VI. THE CREATION OF THE LITERARY NORM OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

The Bulgarian language, because of Bulgaria's failure to achieve its national unification in the 20th century and following imposed emigration of the population after a couple of wars, has witnessed a record number of written regional codifications – six all in all.

One of them was carried out in 1944–1945 in Vardar Macedonia (at that time Democratic Federal Macedonia within Yugoslavia) on the basis of the Bulgarian literary language. In that case, in fact, the point at issue was not an initial codification but a second codification, i.e. a *(re)codification* of the already established (as early as the Revival Period) Bulgarian literary language with a diverse history and a long written tradition. The dialect (or broadly speaking, the regional) characteristics of the Skopje variant of the norm in Macedonia were subsequently overlaid to create the false impression that the "codification" had been done on some alleged dialect basis, i.e. the process was to be presented as natural, the way the literary forms of other languages actually emerge.

According to the Austrian Slavist Otto Kronsteiner the principles of setting up new nations and languages in the Eastern bloc has always been identical. He comments on the Macedonian language situation by giving the example of Moldova after its occupation and annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940, when the local Romanian language had to be changed to Moldovan as a result of a political decision. In the first place, *"an orthography, a grammar, a dictionary, bilingual dictionaries"* were published. *"Soon they were followed by the publication of a historical grammar, a history of the language, and a history of its nation. As some kind of "flanking" activities an Academy of Sciences, a National Theatre and a National Folklore Ensemble were set up. Parallel to that a national literature appeared… A precondition for all that was the writing of a national history… The direction of development was determined by (the implicit) principle that "the worse you treat the old language, the better it is for the new", i.e. the worse one speaks/writes in Romanian, the better they speak/write in Moldovan. In the end, this means continual widening of the artificial chasm with the old language (including the use of force)."* The situation is analogous to that in Vardar Macedonia. It was not by chance that the first official *Македонско-руски речник/Македонско-русский словарь*

[Macedonian-Russian Dictionary] (D. Tolovski, V. M. Illich-Svitych) (Moscow 1963) was compiled and published in the USSR.

The true picture of the division of the Bulgarian language (glottotomy) becomes clear when reading Dr. Stoyan Risteski's *Стенографски белешки од првата јазична комисија* [Stenographic Notes of the First Language Commission] (Facsimile, Skopje 2000). Its participants talked and discussed things freely and in earnest. Their language was literary Bulgarian with a very slight regiolectal stylization. The activities of the commission are of great importance since the participants' open-hearted contributions make it clear that they were acting on the political orders from Belgrade, i.e. carrying out the codification based on no Macedonian tradition of its own, with no knowledge of the dialect basis of the language, no literature created by writers, journalists, etc. The first commission consisted of 11 members. On the second day Blazhe Koneski left it.  He was a Serbian functionary, with incomplete university courses in Belgrade and Sofia, yet conferred later the title of a full member of the Macedonian Academy. The reason for his leaving was his abortive attempt to impose Vuk Karadžić's Serbian alphabet *en bloc*. He reached his goal to a considerable degree somewhat later, through the politically appointed second and third commissions. To the imposed Serbian letters *љ*, *њ*, *ј*, *џ*, Koneski, assisted by high-echelon Yugoslav party functionary Milovan Djilas, succeeded in passing the decision to exclude the letter ъ (for being "Bulgarian") and replace it with an apostrophe, because the sound ъ still existed in the language (e.g. *тъга* [təga] becomes *т'га*).

The most candid in the first commission was Georgi Kiselinov who admitted that "*Литературниот јазик го прават литераторите и журналистите, а филолозите имат само да установат формите на јазикот. Ама денеска ако сакаме да floppyземе едно наречје од нашиот јазик како литературен јазик немаме време да чекаме да се прави тој јазик. Ние сме изправени пред вопросот да имаме литературен јазик, а немаме време и не можеме да чекаме тој јазик да го направат поети, книжовници и журналисти*" ["The literary language is created by men of letters and journalists, whereas the philologists' job is to establish the forms of the language. However, nowadays, if we want to select one dialect of our language as a literary language, we do not have the time to wait while this language is made. We are faced

with the issue to have a literary language, still we do not have the time and we cannot wait that language to be made by poets, writers, and journalists"].

The Vardar recodifiers, along with the linguistic recension also carried out a content one, i.e. they remade the original texts by expunging parts of them or inserting new texts, nonexistent in the original ones, with the aim of replacing the geographical characteristics with ethnic ones, yet invariably with a back date. Thus, in *Граматика на македонскиот литературен јазик* [Grammar of the Macedonian Literary Language] (in Macedonian) (Skopje 1966) Blazhe Koneski stated that it was with a back date that he was going to change the ethnic name of the medieval written monuments, i.e. from Bulgarian he made them "Macedonian": "*Овие споменици досега **обично во славистиката се наречуваа** со името **среднобугарски**, и ако фактички мораше да се прави секогаш разлика меѓу македонските и бугарските споменици од тој период… Терминот **среднобугарски** внесува баш во овој поглед нејасност, а настрана тоа што тој **денеска**, при постоењето на македонска и бугарска нација, не се оправдува*" ["Those monuments **have been usually referred to in Slavistics** by the name of **Middle Bulgarian**, provided a difference could always be drawn between the Macedonian and Bulgarian monuments of that period… The term **Middle Bulgarian** brings in lack of clarity, and besides that, **nowadays**, with the existence of a Macedonian and Bulgarian nations it is not justifiable"]. This was the start of an unprecedented change of the ethnic name of writers (and their works) regardless of their own explicit self-determination of having a Bulgarian national identity: in Koneski's *Grammar* the Bulgarian section in Daniil's *Tetraglosson Dictionary* became "Macedonian" (pp. 19–20), the major work of the Russian scholar Afanasii M. Selishchev *Полог и его болгарское население* [Polog and Its Bulgarian Population] (in Russian) was reduced merely to *Полог* (p. 130), the works of Yoakim Karchovski and Kiril Peychinovich lost the modifier  "Bulgarian" (for language) in their titles (p. 21); the Bulgarian schools in Macedonia were called "Macedonian" (p. 23), the Bulgarian textbooks of Kuzman Shapkarev and Parteniy Zografski were labeled "Macedonian" (p. 23), the Bulgarian Revival poets and writers Konstantin Miladinov, Rayko Zhinzifov and Grigor Parlichev became "македонски преродбеници" [Macedonian Revival activists] (p. 24), the Miladinov brothers' folklore collection
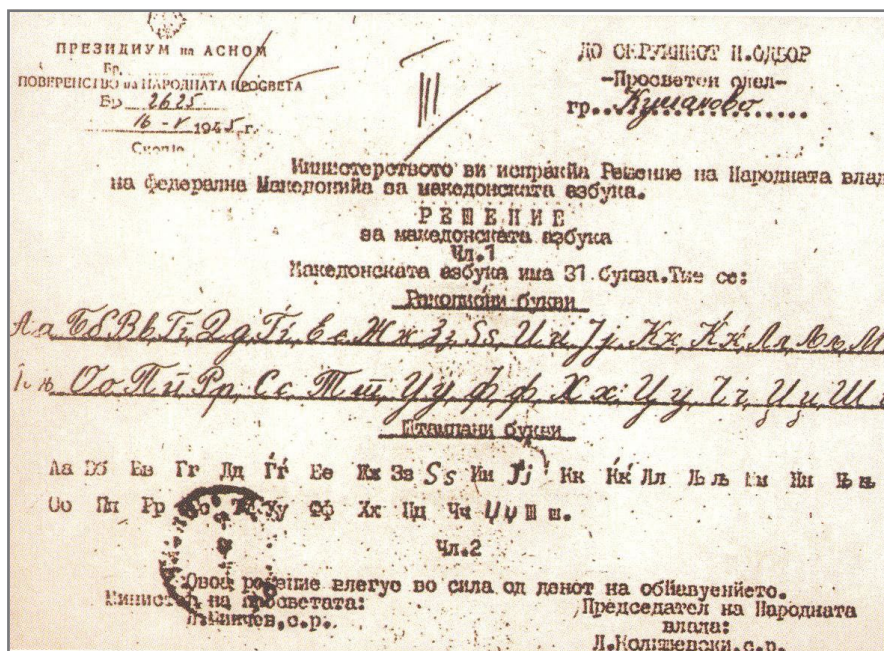
Resolution of the Government of Yugoslav Federal Macedonia on the Macedonian Alphabet, 1945

*Български народни песни* [Bulgarian Folk Songs] (1861) came out with a new title of *Зборник* [A Collection] (p. 19), etc. It is not a mere chance that in the *Grammar* a bibliography of authors and names is missing. Such practice emerged as a methodological routine of all philologists in Macedonia coming after Koneski. What is more, the avalanche replacement of original titles and texts became contagious and infected the representatives of Comintern linguistics abroad. *Le grand homme* of Slavists in the Soviet Union at that time (and by extension in the Eastern bloc countries) Samuil Bernstein changed the title of Hristo Kodov's book *Тракийските говори като преход между източнобългарските и македонските говори* [The Thracian Dialects as Transition between the Eastern Bulgarian and the Western Bulgarian Dialects] (in Bulgarian) to *Тракийските говори като преход между източнобългарските и македонски* [The Thracian Dialects as Transition between the Eastern Bulgarian Ones and Macedonian].

In specific cases, when Koneski was pressed by time to recodify (i.e. partially remake), he resorted to even more radical solutions – he directly copied (i.e. plagiarized) using the same examples from Lyubomir Andreychin's *Основна българска граматика* [Basic Bulgarian Grammar] (in Bulgarian) (1942), cf. the texts in Table 2.

| **Lyubomir Andreychin**<br>*Основна българска граматика* (in Bulgarian) [Basic Bulgarian Grammar] (Sofia 1942, p. 64) | **Blazhe Koneski**<br>*Граматика на македонскиот литературен јазик* [Grammar of the Macedonian Literary Language] (in Macedonian)<br>(Skopje 1966, pp. 61–62) |
| --- | --- |
| (a) "Ако сравним думи и форми като *бера, брах, избирам, избор*, за нас е ясно, че те са образувани все от един корен, въпреки че той се явява в *бера* под форма *бер-*, в *брах* под форма *бр-*, в *избирам* под форма *бир-*, и в *избор* под форма *бор-*". ["If words and forms such as *бера* [bera], *брах* [brah], *избирам* [izbiram], *избор* [izbor] are to be compared, it is clear for us that they are derived from the same root although it is realized as *бер-* [ber-] in *бера* [bera], as *бр-* [br-] in *брах* [brah], as *бир-* [bir-] in *избирам* [izbiram], and as *бор-* [bor-] in *избор* [izbor]."] | (a) "Кај извесен број зборови, образувани од исти корен се забележува разлика во кореновиот вокал: *бере, брал, пребира, избор*. Кај приведениве зборови коренот се јавува под форми *бер-, бр-, бир-, бор-*." ["In a certain number of words, deriving from the same root, there occur differences in the root vowel: *бере* [bere], *брал* [bral], *пребира* [prebira], *избор* [izbor]. In the words given, the root appears in the forms *бер-* [ber-], *бир-* [bir-], *бор-* [bor-]."] |
| (b) "Основното съотношение на гласните, които се редуват в някои глаголи и имена, образувани от един и същи корен, е *е – о*, напр. *бера – сбор, тека – ток, река – пророк, лежа – полог, стеля – стол, дера – раздор, неса – внос* и др. " ["The main correlation of the vowels which alternate in some vowels and nouns, deriving from the same root, is *е – о*, e.g. *бера* [bera] – *сбор* [sbor], *тека* [teka] – *ток* [tok], *река* [reka] – *пророк* [prorok], *лежа* [lezha] – *полог* [polog], *стеля* [stelya] – *стол* [stol], *дера* [dera] – *раздор* [razdor], *неса* [nesa] – *внос* [vnos], etc."] | (b) "Редување на самогласките наоѓаме кај некои глаголи и именки, изведени од исти корени, при кое е најобичен односот *е – о: бере – избор, рече – пророк, урок, лежа – полог, постеле – стол, дере – раздор, внесе – внос, пренесе – пренос, лее – лој* и др. " ["Alternations of the vowels can be found with some verbs and nouns, derived from the same roots, the most frequent being *е – о: бере* [bere] – *избор* [izbor], *рече* [reche] – *пророк* [prorok], *урок* [urok], *лежа* [lezha] – *полог* [polog], *постеле* [postele] – *стол* [stol], *дере* [dere] – *раздор* [razdor], *внесе* [vnese] – *внос* [vnos], *пренесе* [prenese] – *пренос* [prenos], *лее* [lee] – *лој* [loy], etc. "] |

| | |
|---|---|
| (c) "В други случаи, в резултат на някои по-сетнешни звукови процеси, или други причини, в корена на глагола се явява друга гласна вм. *е* или няма никаква гласна: *бия – бой, вия – завой, гния – гной, пия – водопой, лея – лой, пея – песнопоец, крия – покров, рия – ров, взра се – взор, извра – извор, мра – мор, запра – запор, простра – простор* и др.* ["In other cases, as a result of some subsequent sound processes, or some other reasons, in the root another vowel instead of *e* appears, or there is no vowel: *бия* [biya] – *бой* [boy], *вия* [viya] – *завой* [zavoy], *гния* [gniya] – *гной* [gnoy], *пия* [piya] – *водопой* [vodopoy], *лея* [leya] – *лой* [loy], *пея* [peya] – *песнопоец* [pesnopoets], *крия* [kriya] – *покров* [pokrov], *рия* [riya] – *ров* [rov], *взра се* [vzra se] – *взор* [vzor], *извра* [izvra] – *извор* [izvor], *мра* [mra] – *мор* [mor], *запра* [zapra] – *запор* [zapor], *простра* [prostra] – *простор* [proctor], etc. "] | (c) "Следните случаи се изделуваат со тоа што кај глаголите во коренот се јавува *и* или пак нема никаков вокал: *бие – бој, вие – повој, гние – гној, пие – упој, крие – покров, рие – ров, продре – прозорец, извре – извор, умре – мор, напре – напор, простре – простор* и др.* ["The following cases are derived with the *i* which appears in the root, or there may appear no vowel: *бие* [bie] – *бој* [boy], *вие* [vie] – *повој* [povoy], *гние* [gnie] – *гној* [gnoy], *пие* [pie] – *упој* [upoy], *крие* [krie] – *покров* [pokrov], *рие* [rie] – *ров* [rov], *продре* [prodzre] – *прозорец* [prozorets], *извре* [izvre] – *извор* [izvor], *умре* [umre] – *умор* [umor], *напре* [napre] – *напор* [napor], *простре* [prostre] – *простор* [prostor], etc. "] |

Blazhe Koneski's numerous followers – philologists, ethologists and historians – resorted to **intralingual** translation that bordered on plagiarizing to recast texts not only by Bulgarians from Macedonia, but also by writers from Moesia and Thrace. By means of the so-called internal *prepevane* [remaking] not only Bulgarian folk poems but also works by Hristo Botev were brazenly expropriated. In publications of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts such texts were presented as "Macedonian" without any indications related to their provenance. In the *Dictionary of Macedonian Folk Poems* (Skopje 1983) Botev's verses from the poem *На прощаване* [On Parting] were recodified: *"Нем жалај, мајко, нем плачи, ќе станам, мајко, ајдутин, ајдутин, мајко, бунтовник / Не можам, мајко, да гледам / Дек турци, мајко беснеат…"* ["Don't cry, mother, don't be sad / that I've become a haidouk / a haidouk, mother, a rebel / For I cannot, mother, watch / how Turks, mother, rage …"]. Another

drastic example comes from a widely popular song about Rayna Knyaginya (Princess Rayna, Rayna Popgeorgieva) from the Balkan town of Panagyurishte, who is described as "Macedonian" by the notorious scholar of folklore Kiril Penushliski in Volume 3 of the *Малеш и Пијанец* [Malesh and Piyanets collection] (Skopje 1989): *"Ајде, најдете ми Рајна Попѓоргова, Рајна кумитката. / Ниту ја колете / ниту ја бесете / Мен ја доведете. Јаз ќе ја попитам: Кој соши бајрако / Кој му тури знако. / Смрт или слобода"* ["Eh, go and find me Rayna Popgorgova, Rayna the rebel / Don't slay her / Don't hang her / Bring her to me. I shall ask her: Who sew the banner / Who put the sign on it / Death or Freedom"].

Examples of such a kind are in the hundreds.

The eminent German Balkanologist Gustav Weigand dedicated a special chapter in his *Ethnographie von Makedonien* [Ethnography of Macedonia] (in German) (Leipzig 1924), entitled **"The Macedonian Bulgarian language"**, wherein he draws the important conclusion that "whichever region of the language we investigate, it becomes absolutely clear that we are dealing with Bulgarian, not with Serbian. All attempts of Serbian chauvinists to present the Macedonian language as a Serbian dialect or as a mixed language of an indefinite character are futile" (Weigand 1998: 79).

In fact, the term *Macedonian Bulgarian language* used also by Weigand, shows that the ethnic definition of *Bulgarian* stands for the *generic term* and embraces the three most important *elements of the lan-*

Ethnographie von Makedonien

Geschichtlich-nationaler, sprachlich-statistischer Teil

Von

Prof. Dr. Gustav Weigand

Mit einem Trachtenbild

Leipzig
Friedrich Brandstetter
1924
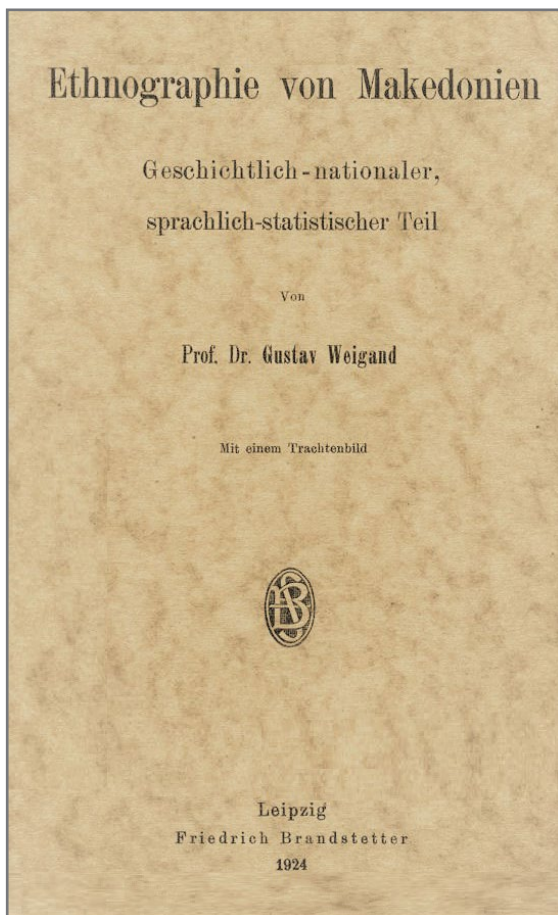
Cover of the first German edition of *Ethnography of Macedonia* (1924) by Gustav Weigand

*gauge*: (a) *its history*; (b) *its dialects* and (c) *its literary form* – as a basis on which later the partial recodification was carried out.

Weigand's definition of **Macedonian** stands for the **specific notion** that envisages the **localization** of several dialect (regional) **elements** which were additionally overlaid on the basis to partially change its general outlook. Such elements are again **Bulgarian**, more specifically **western Bulgarian**. All in all, the overall structure of this language – phonetically, grammatically and lexically – is Bulgarian. The lexical borrowings (the Serbisms) in some registers do not change the nature of the language, notably, *its grammatical structure, the only one in the world of a Slavic-Balkan type.*

The creation of the so-called "Macedonian literary language" in the middle of the 20th century in the heart of Europe, despite its twelve-century long Bulgarian literary tradition, was a political act, imposed from outside, i.e. it came as the fruition of a foreign national doctrine. Regardless of the negative consequences – certain distancing from the characteristic trends in its development and even severance with the national traditions – the phenomenon had a partial positive effect – the Bulgarian language labeled as Macedonian became the third official language of Tito's Yugoslavia, alongside with Serbo-Croatian and Slovenian. Though slightly changed, it was, in fact, saved from destruction under a regional name, without being banned, as was the case in 1913 when Vardar Macedonia was incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbia.

The use of a state name as a linguistic one is not necessarily a characteristic of the ethnic identity of new states: there are no Austrian, Swiss or Belgian languages in Europe, neither are there Cuban, Chilean or Mexican languages in America (the list of similar cases in the world is very long), but there are Austrian German, Swiss German, Belgian French (Walloon), Cuban Spanish and Chilean and Mexican Spanish, respectively, i.e. in linguistics variance is marked by double naming.

For great nations, such as the American one, there is no problem to use English as a state and national language, having no scruples about it. The fact that in the Republic of North Macedonia there are various forms of Bulgarian – historical (written), dialect (spoken), literary-recodified – should not be the cause of an inferiority complex in the citizens of our southwestern neighbor, for it must be borne in mind that most of these forms have their provenance there.

Indeed, the new literary norm in the Republic of North Macedonia is neither mastered to perfection, nor is it accepted unequivocally by a number of contemporary writers there. What it lacks is the unifying function typical of any national literary language that has developed in a natural way. This is what one of the most acclaimed contemporary Macedonian writers Mladen Sărbinovski has to say in his essay *The Image and Language* included in his book *За македонистките работи* [On Macedonianist Matters] (Sofia 2011):



Mladen Sărbinovski.
*On Macedonianist Matters*. Sofia, 2011

"…*От Вруток съм, Гостиварско, сам съм си поставил за задача да напиша един текст на вруточки или на гостиварски, но не ми достигат букви. Имам един драматургичен текст „Хитър Петър“, но ми се отваря проблем с писмото на езика за пиесата. Такъв текст е невъзможен без архаичен и сочен език: „Хитър Петър“ не следва езиковите стандарти, поставени от „гения от Небрегово“* (Блаже Конески – б.р.)*, а аз не владея по-добре друг диалект от този, на който за пръв път съм проговорил, на който и днес си говоря вкъщи, диалект, който много се страхувам да не загубя набързо*…". "*Правописът на нашия книжовен език е Прокрустовото ложе за моя роден диалект!*" ["… I am from Vrutok, the county of Gostivar, and I have set myself the task to write a text in the Vrutok or Gostivar vernacular, but I lack letters. I have a text of a play *Sly Petar,* but there pops up a problem with how to deliver the language for the play. Such a text is impossible without archaic and lively language: *Sly Petar* cannot be bound to the language standards set by "the genius of Nebregovo" (Blazhe Koneski – ed.), and I have not mastered another dialect any better than the one I first learnt and today speak at home; this is the dialect I am very much afraid that I
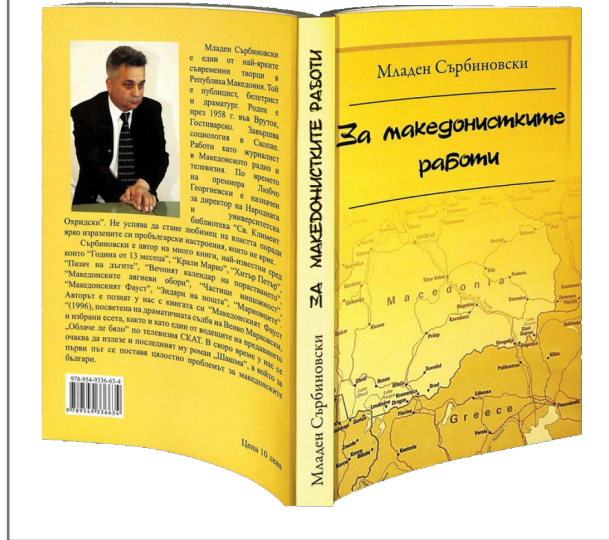
may quickly lose…" "… The orthography of our literary language is the Procrustean bed of my native dialect."] (p. 77).

Politicians and linguists from the Republic of Macedonia, currently Republic of North Macedonia, present the issue of the official language of the country as resolved once and for all. As a matter of fact, for a number of foreign linguists it remains a good example that illustrates the problems of solving the distinction between language and dialect. Thus, according to the German linguist Klaus Steinke "… it was the political situation at the end of World War II alone that allowed for the formulation, proclamation and imposition of a specific written standard…" (Steinke 1999).

The conclusion was corroborated in the plenary paper at the 13th International Congress of Slavists in Ljubljana delivered by Austrian scholar Gerhard Neweklowski (Neweklowsky 2003: 161–178). In the paper he analyzes the contemporary literary language of the Republic of North Macedonia from a synchronic and a historical point of view. Neweklowski emphasizes the historical fact that in 1913–1941 on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia the official Serbian language was used and the local dialects were presented as southern Serbian dialects. The decision for the creation of a "Macedonian language" was taken by the Communist International in 1934. According to him, "the Macedonian language" was established on the basis of the western Vardar-Macedonian subdialect and in Bulgaria it is perceived as a western Bulgarian regional written norm. He points out that many famous Slavists and Balkanologists define "Macedonian" as Bulgarian. The Austrian scholar recalls that in 1861 the Miladinov brothers, born in Struga, published folk songs from Macedonia entitled *Bulgarian Folk Songs.* He also stresses the fact that contemporary "Macedonian" is characterized by receptivity to foreign influence and consistent efforts towards isolation from the standard Bulgarian language.

# VII. THE CONTEMPORARY DIALECTS IN KOSOVO AND ALBANIA AND THE MACEDONIAN REGIONAL WRITTEN NORM

Solid proof of the Bulgarian character of the dialects in the geographical region of Macedonia is found in the linguistic characteristics and the linguistic self-identification of the vernacular of the Bulgarians in Albania, who have been recognized as an official minority since 2017. They identify their vernacular as "нашенску" [nashenski ('ours')] when communicating with visitors from Bulgaria – cf. e.g. the dialogue:

– *От к'ѐге сте?* [Ot k'ѐde ste? – 'Where are you from?']

– *От Бъ̀лгария.* [Ot Balgariya. – 'From Bulgaria.']

– *À, те Булгàрийа нàшенск'и збòрет. Дòбро да ви чỳйеме* [A, te Bulgàriya nàshensk'i zbòret. Dòbro da vi chùyeme. – 'Well, in Bulgaria they speak the way we do. It's good to see you.'] (the village of Borje, Gora, municipality of Kukës, located in the northern part of Albania near the border with Macedonia and Kosovo).

According to information coming from a family from the village of Steblevo (Alb. Gollobordë, near Debar in Macedonia), both their children and the eldest members of the family did not speak Albanian till they went to kindergarten:

"*Мàйка ми мòйа нѐ знойт àлбанско да збòрвит. И свекòрва ми, мàйка му на Àджи… Мòйте децà ги растѐла мàйка ми до тригодѝшни … Кàзват по бòлгарски: сàкам лѐп, сàкам вòда. Мàйчин йòзик! Шò к'е зàзборвит джагỳрин'а* (децàта), *шò к'е зàвелит дỳми – бỳгарско.*" [Màyka mi mòya nѐ znoyt àlbansko da zbòrvit. I svekòrva mi, màyka mu na Àdzhi… Mòyte detsà gi rastѐla màyka mi do trigodìshni… Kàzvat po bòlgarski sàkam lѐp, sàkam vòda. Màychin yòzik! Shò k'e zàzborvit dzhagùrin'a (detsata), shò k'e zàvelit dùmi – bùgarsko. – 'My mother doesn't know how to speak Albanian. My mother-in-law, Adzhi's mother, doesn't know either… My children were brought up by my mother till the age of three… They say it in Bulgarian: I want bread, I want water. It's a mother language!'] The data recorded from an adult woman from the village of Ginevets, Gollobordë, who has been living in Tirana since her teens, are also telltale: from what she says it can be gathered that the denominations of the nationalities in the region are used in line

with the denominations of the neighboring countries: *Macedonia – Macedonians, Shchipriya < Shqipëri (Albania) – Shchiptare (Albanians)*, but she was aware that in the county of Debar the language that was spoken was Bulgarian: "*Дѐбра е гòлема, збòрвет бòлгарцко. Шчиптàре збòрвет бòлгарцко, мак'ѐдоне збòрвет бòлгарцко, а шкòло бòлгарцко нѐ праим.*" [Dèbra e gòlema, zbòrvet bòlgarsko… Shchiptàre zbòrvet bòlgartsko, mak'èdone zbòrvet bòlgarsko, a shkòlo bòlgarsko nè praim. – 'Debar is a big [region], Bulgarian is spoken. The Albanians speak Bulgarian, the Macedonians speak Bulgarian, but we don't have a Bulgarian school.']

The local people from the county of Debar are aware that the limited sphere of their native language usage impairs its full value: "*Нàшиот йòзик ѐсти прѐкуден* (прогонен) *йòзик.*" [Nàshiot yòzik èsti prèkuden (progonen) yòzik. – 'Our language is a banished language.'], they say. In Gora the expression *изл'ỳштен йàзик* [izlyushten yazik] is used with the same meaning. Literate representatives of the middle generation in their active age claim that it is a language "without grammar" – cf. the words of a medical doctor from the county of Debar: "*Мѝе знàим пòвеке мàйчин йòзик под йòзик. Нѐмаме ỳчено грамàтика. Го дòржиме мàйчин йòзик без да го ѝмаме ỳчено нà школе.*" [Mie znàym pòveke màychin yòzik pod yòzik. Nèmame ùcheno gramàtika. Go dòrzhime màychin yòzik bez da go ìmame ùcheno nà shkole. – 'We know more the mother tongue under language. We haven't studied grammar. We keep the mother tongue without having studied it at school.'] Those people maintaining closer contacts with Bulgaria and having some knowledge of the Bulgarian literary language judge the differences between their native dialect and the Bulgarian language as differences between the spoken and written modes of the language: "*Йàс бỳгарски знàм, ама нѐ знам да пѝша и да чѐта. Дѐтето, гòспожо, си знàит йòзик от тàтка и от мàйка. Тѝ да го наỳчиш сàмо да пѝшит и да пѐит* (да чеме)." [Yàs bùgarski znàm, ama nè znam da pìsha i da chèta. Dèteto, gòspozho, si znàit yòzik ot tàtka i ot màyka. Tì da go naùchish sàmo da pìshi i da pèit (da chete). – 'I know Bulgarian but I can neither read, nor write. The child, missis, knows the language from mother and father. All you have to do is to teach him to write and read'].

With reference to the Bulgarian dialects in the area of Prizren, they are defined by the inhabitants of the area as "нàшенски" [nashenski

('ours')] (sometimes in the presence of visitors form Bulgaria as "вàшенcки" [vashenski ('yours')], "бỳгарcки" [bugarski 'Bulgarian'] or, alternatively, "бугарùшмŭа" [bugarishtya]. In a fully realistic fashion some of the inhabitants regard them also as mixed – "бỳгарcкu u срŭнcкu" [bugarski i srəpski ('Bulgarian and Serbian')], and with reference to the language of neighboring Macedonia usually they remark "бỳгарcкu u македòнcкu ùсмo е." [bùgarski i makedònski ìsto e – 'Bulgarian and Macedonian are the same'].

As already mentioned, one of the foreign scholars, who straightforwardly posited the Bulgarian character of the dialects in Albania and Macedonia, was Russian linguist Afanasii M. Selishchev. In 1934 he noted the presence of Bulgarian dialects in Kosovo by revealing the link between the dialects in the area of Prizren and those in the area of Polog in Macedonia. According to him, "… the Slavic groups in Macedonia, the South Morava Valley, Moesia and Thrace reacted similarly to foreign language influences… all this clearly demonstrates the common nature of the language system, of the language trends and of the cultural and language centers and social relations of the Slavic groups in Macedonia and the Morava Valley, Moesia and Thrace: these are groups that have been widely known for a long time under the name of Bulgarians." (Selishchev 1934).

Some of the most prominent Bulgarian linguists took part in the 1916 research expedition in Macedonia and the Morava Valley. In the materials of the expedition Benyo Tsonev wrote: "… and beyond Macedonia's borders, i.e. beyond the Shar Mountains, there are more Bulgarians whose vernacular is miraculously more pristine Bulgarian than in the remotest Macedonian counties: in the area of Prizren and Albania there are big groups of villages (I noted down up to 60 villages!), inhabited by Pomaks, who have preserved the ancient enunciation of ѫ [$o^n$] as ъ [ə]..." (Petrov (ed.) 1993: 155). It is worth mentioning here that in German ethnography and linguistics the expedition received full approval, which shows in the letters of eminent scholar Gustav Weigand to Stefan Mladenov from 1917 published later by Klaus Steinke (Steinke 1990).

In the recent past the Serbian scholars themselves also acknowledged the Bulgarian character of the population in the Morava Valley. Sources disclosing that fact are cited in Hristo Gerchev's book *Сръбски свидетелства върху българите в Моравско* [Serbian Evidence about the Bulgarians from the Morava Valley] (in

Bulgarian) (Sofia 1921). However, in modern Serbian dialectological research the presence of a compact mass of Bulgarian population in the area of Prizren is not mentioned; reference is made only to certain "Бугарићи" (Bugarichi – 'Bulgarian') families.

The above evidence can be reinforced with the fact that the father of the Miladinov brothers was born in the village of Steblevo, near Debar (in today's Albania). The characteristic dialect features of the Bulgarian vernaculars in Kosovo and Albania display their archaic peculiarities, their link with both Old Bulgarain and the contemporary Bulgarian language preserved along with the Bulgarian language awareness to date. This comes as clear proof that the dialects on the territory of today's Republic of North Macedonia represent a part of an integral genetically connected linguistic area including Bulgaria, Macedonia, Eastern Albania and Southeastern Kosovo. In terms of sociolinguistic criteria used by R. A. Hudson (Hudson 1995), in the presence of factors such as mutual comprehensibility and above all a common grammatical structure, such language entities should be viewed as belonging to the same language. Despite the functioning of the artificially created written regional norm, in its essence the language of the Republic of North Macedonia is an inseparable part of the Bulgarian language.

# VIII. THE UNITY OF THE BULGARIAN DIALECTS

The analysis of the maps in the summarizing volumes of the *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas* (Sofia, vols. I–III, 2001; vol. IV, 2016) unequivocally shows that there is no clearcut boundary between the dialects of the Republic of North Macedonia and the ones on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, hence the political borders cannot serve as linguistic boundaries.

The "Macedonian" literary language was created on the basis of the **a**-dialects (*заб* [zab]*, маж* [mazh]*, гаска* [gaska]). These are commonly heard in the areas of Bitola, Prilep, Veles, Stip, Kicevo, also in Western Bulgaria (the areas of Petrich, Razlog, Blagoevgrad, Dupnitsa, Kyustendil, Samokov, Sofia, Pirdop, Botevgrad, Vratsa), as well as in some parts to the east (the areas of Devin, Smolyan, Gyumyurdzhina (Greek Komotini)). The dialects of Drama, Serres, Kukush (Greek Kiklis), Voden (Greek Edessa), Kaylyar (Greek Ptolemaida), Ohrid, Struga, Debar, Gostivar, Gora are characterized by the **ъ** vowel (*зъб* [zəb]*, мъж* [məzh]*, гъска* [gəska]), i.e. in a large part of the southwestern and the remote southwestern dialects, together with the dialects of Eastern Bulgaria and some of the northwestern dialects. The dialects of Tetovo, Kumanovo and Kratovo are grouped with the dialects of the Morava Valley, Tran, Breznik and Belogradchik on the basis of the vowel **u** (*зуб* [zub]*, муж* [muzh]*, гуска* [guska]).

The vowel **o** replaces the Old Bulgarian back vowel (**ъ**) in the Macedonian dialects (*сон* [son]*, дош* [dosh]); it also occurs in the Macedonian literary norm though not universally. In the areas of Tetovo, Skopje, Kumanovo and Kratovo the reflex is **ъ**. Indeed, the transition of the Old Bulgarian **ъ** to **o** can be found both in Western and Eastern Bulgaria.

Data shows that the southwestern dialects, which participate in the building of the Skopje regional norm, are part of the western Bulgarian dialects in which the Old Bulgarian big nasal (**ѫ**) is **a**, and the Old Bulgarian back vowel (**ъ**) is **o**.

The Bulgarian dialects are divided in two big groups on the basis of the different pronunciation of the Old Bulgarian jat vowel (**ят (ѣ)**) in stressed position before a hard syllable – to the east **я (ja)** or **ê** (open **e**) (*бял* [byal]*, бêл* [bêl]), and to the west **e** (*бел* [bel]). The so-called *jat border* between them starts at Nikopol, passes through the

## Мар № Ф 21

Mutations (reflexes) of the Old Bulgarian ѫ in words such as **зъб** (tooth),
**мъж** (man) < Old Bulgarian зѫбъ, мѫжь



- ъ (ъ̂, ъ̌, ъ̥) – зъп, мъш и др.
- у – зуп, муш и др.
- а – зап, маш и др.
- ô – зôп, мôш и др.
- o < ô – зоп, мош и др.
- ê – зêп, мêш и др.
- наличие на разложен назализъм ам, ан, ăм, ăн, ôм, ôн, ъм, ън – замп, маниц, зôмп, мôнш и др.

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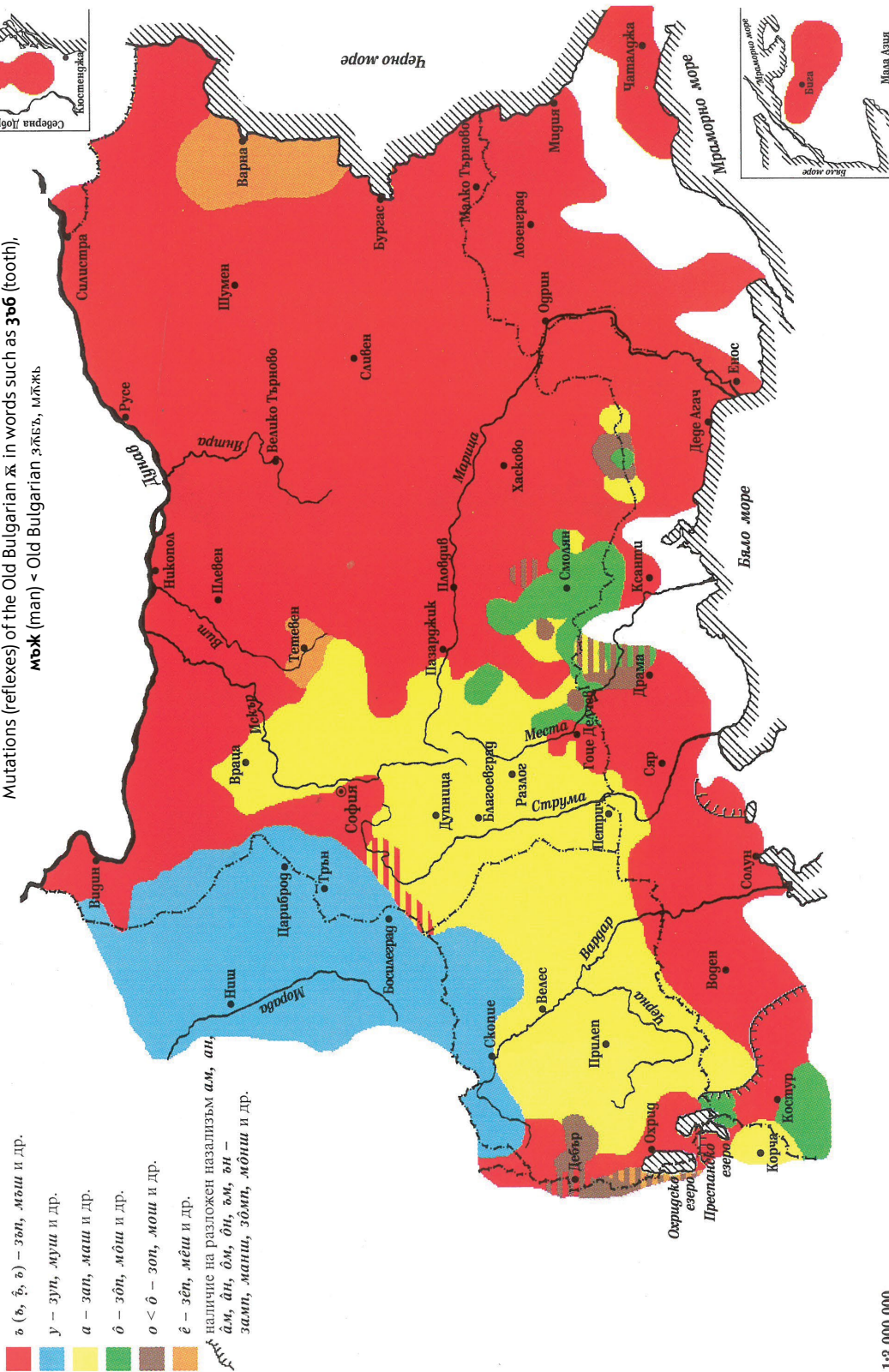
## Мар № Ф 35

Mutations (reflexes) of the Old Bulgarian stressed ѣ in front of a soft syllable in words such as **бели** (white), **время** (time), **понеделник** (Monday) < Old Bulgarian бѣли, врѣмѧ, понедѣльникъ



### Legend

1. Широки застъпници
   ê ('ê, 'ä) – бêли, б'äли и др.
   'а – б'äли и др.

2. Тесни застъпници
   е ('е, ê) – бели, бêли и др.

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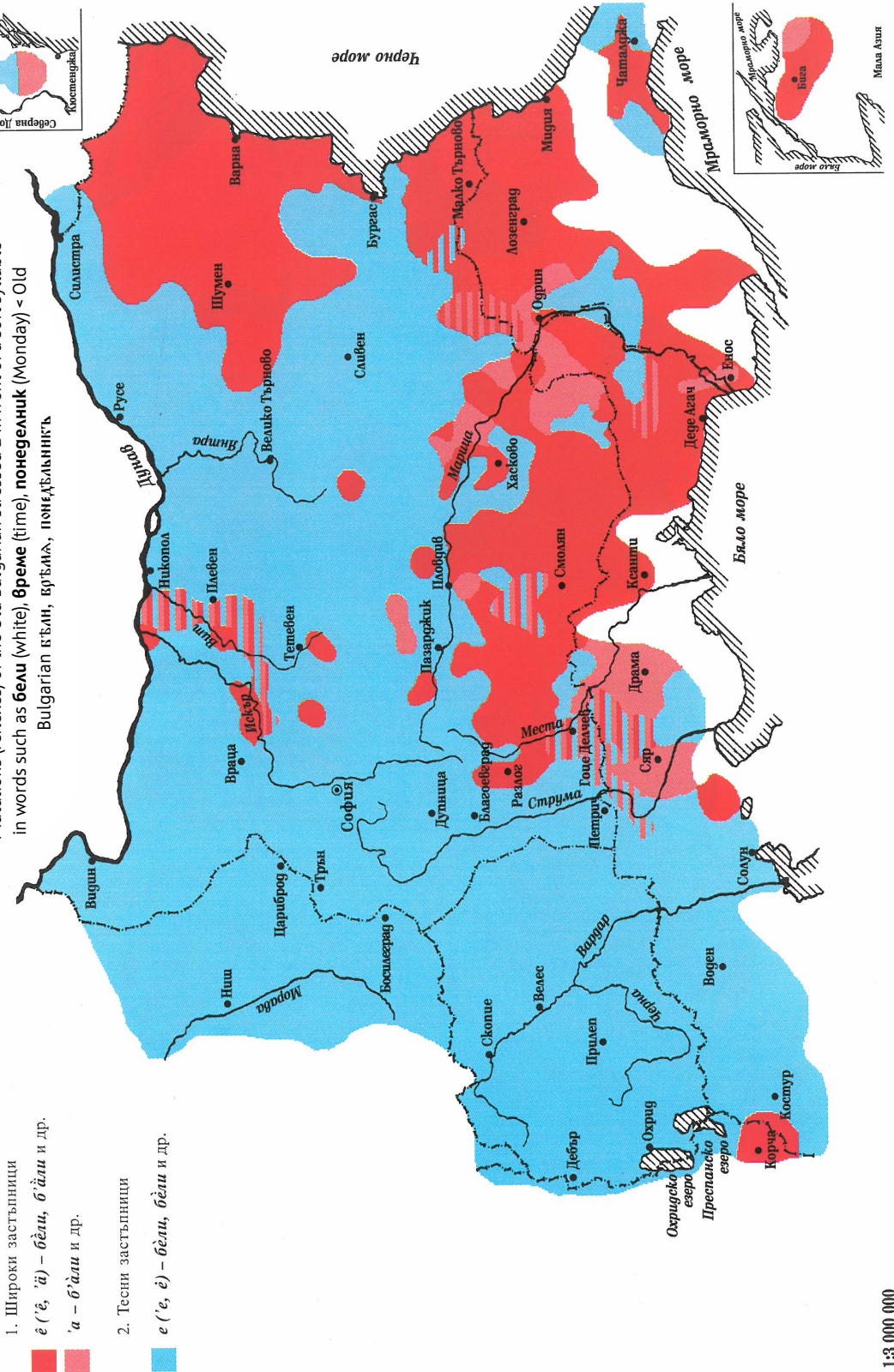
areas of Pleven, Lukovit, Lovech, Teteven, Pirdop, Panagyurishte, Ihtiman, Peshtera, Chepino, Razlog, Melnik, Kiklis, and reaches Thessaloniki.

The maps which record this phonetic phenomenon objectively prove that the southwestern dialects, and more specifically those in Vardar Macedonia, are related to the western Bulgarian dialects in the enunciation of **e** (*дедо* [dedo]*, млеко* [mleko]) replacing the Old Bulgarian jat vowel (**ѣ**).

The enunciation of **e** from **ѣ** before a soft syllable (*бели* [beli]*, време* [vreme]*, понеделник* [ponedelnik]) is characteristic of both all western Bulgarian dialects (with the exception of the dialect in the area of Korca where it is open) and the northeastern ones, i.e. it encompasses the South-West, the North-West and the North-East of the Bulgarian dialect territory.

In the domain of lexis the unity of the Bulgarian language at dialect level can also be traced on the maps of the *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas*.

The codified dialect characteristics of the regional norm in the Republic of North Macedonia, typical also of other Bulgarian dialects, cannot serve as proof of the presence of a separate language. The grammatical structure which forms the backbone of any language remains unchanged. In that respect, there is not a single substantial difference, and all the characteristics outlined below are typical of the whole Bulgarian language territory, including Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia. ***These typological characteristics of the Bulgarian language make it different from the rest of Slavic languages which have preserved their case systems. Bulgarian is the only analytical language among all of them.*** It is characterized by:

– analytical character of the nominal system (the expression of relations through prepositions – *чашата **на Петър*** ['the glass **of Petar'***, *отидох **при Иван*** ['I went **to Ivan'**] ;

– presence of an article going with the nominal categories (***мъжът** почива* ['**the** man is relaxing']*, жен**ите** дойдоха* ['**the** women came']*, дец**ата** играят* ['**the** children are playing']*, червен**ата** шапка* ['**the** red hat']);

– presence of a double object with the nominal categories (***него го** видяха* ['lit. him him saw ('he was seen')]*, на **нея ѝ** казаха* ['lit. told her her' ('she was told')]);

**Мар № Л 14**

*Words for domestic weaving loom*



Legend:

- *стан,* срв. стб. стати, станѫ
- *разбои,* срв. стб. развити
- *смокове*
- *креватини*
- *д'узен*

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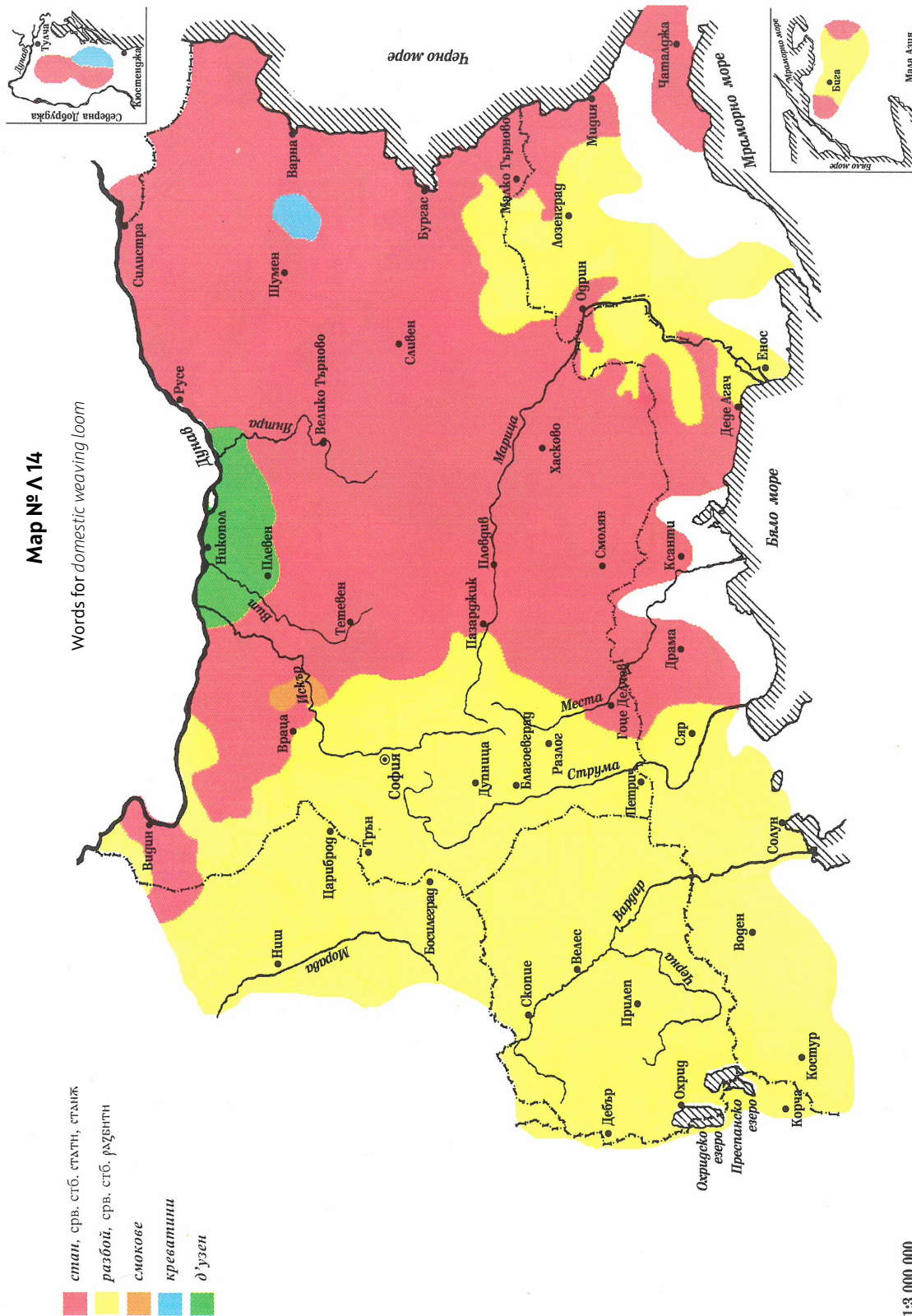
## Мар №2

General typological characteristics of the Bulgarian dialects and their historical boundaries

1. Presence of a stress accent and absence of different types of intonations in vowels
2. Absence of a phonological vocal quantity
3. Analytical nature of the nominal system (nouns and adjectives)
4. Presence of an article morpheme in the nominal system
5. Presence of a double object in the nominal categories
6. Analytical expression of comparative and superlative degrees in the nominal categories, verbs and adverbs
7. Analytical expression of the infinitive with a *da*-construction
8. Presence of a rich verbal system with many forms for past and future tenses
9. Analytical expression of the forms of future tense by means of particles
10. Presence of renarrative verbal forms

1:3 000 000

Черно море
Мраморно море
Бяло море

Севрена Добруджа
Костенирка

Мраморно море
Бяло море
Мала Азия
Бига

Силистра
Варна
Шумен
Русе
Янтра
Велико Търново
Сливен
Бургас
Малко Търново
Лозенград
Одрин
Мидия
Чаталджа
Енос
Деде Агач
Ксанти
Смолян
Хасково
Марица
Пловдив
Пазарджик
Никопол
Плевен
Дунав
Видин
Искър
Вит
Враца
Тетевен
Драма
Сяр
Места
Тоце Делчев
Благоевград
Петрич
Разлог
Струма
Дупница
София
Трън
Цариброд
Босилеград
Ниш
Морава
Вардар
Скопие
Велес
Прилен
Черна
Воден
Солун
Дебър
Охрид
Корча
Костур
Охридско езеро
Преспанско езеро

– analytical expression of the comparative and superlative degrees of the nominal categories, the verbs and the adverbs (*по-красив* ['**more** beautiful'], *най-красив* ['**most** beautiful']; *по-високо* [lit. '**more** highly' (higher)], *най-високо* [lit. '**most** highly' (highest)]; *пò обичам* [lit. 'like **more**'], *нàй обичам* [lit. 'like **most**']);

– analytical expression of the infinitive with *da*-constructions (*трябва да работя* ['I have to work'], *да изляза* ['I have to go out']);

– presence of a rich verbal system with many forms for past and future tenses: *ходих* ['I went' (Aorist)], *ходех* ['I was going' (Imperfectum)], *ходил съм* ['I have gone' (Perfectum)], *бях ходил* ['I had gone' (Plusquamperfectum)], *ще ходя* ['I shall go' (Futurum)], *ще съм ходил* ['I shall have gone' (Futurum exactum)], *щях да ходя* ['I would have gone' (Futurum praeteriti)], *щях да съм ходил* ['I would have gone' (Futurum exactum praeteriti)] and others;

– analytical expression of the forms of the future tense by means of particles (*ще ходя* ['I **shall** go'], *ще работя* ['I **shall** work']);

– presence of renarrative verbal forms: *ходил* ['he reportedly went' (Renarrative pres.)], *щял да ходи* ['he would reportedly go' (Renarrative fut.)]; *правил* ['he reportedly did' (Renarrative pres.)], *бил съм правил* ['I had repotedly done' (Renarrative perfect)].

The above-listed sound, grammatical and lexical phenomena bear testimony yet again to the unity of the Bulgarian language at a dialect level since no differences are found in the dialects of the entire Bulgarian language, covering Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia.

# IX. CONTEMPORARY ETHNODEMOGRAPHIC DIMENSIONS OF THE LANGUAGE QUESTION

The issues reviewed above have been directly dependent on the development of the social and political situation in the Republic of North Macedonia in the different, easily distinguishable periods of its existence.

In the past, the so-called "Macedonian language" was used as a major tool in the political expansion of Macedonianism, including the political incorporation by Yugoslavia of parts of the neighboring countries, or of whole states.

Starting as early as November 1944, several months before the codification of the new linguistic norm, an organized campaign was launched as Yugoslav emissaries were sent to Pirin and Aegean Macedonia, and also to the eastern parts of Albania. After the ratification of the orthography of the new written norm, two-week preparatory seminars for teachers were organized in Bitola and Resen. In 1945–1946, teachers of the so-called "Macedonian language" were sent from Yugoslavia to the other parts of the geographical region of Macedonia – to Albania, Bulgaria and Greece. Their task was to expand the territorial scope of the ethnolinguistic transformation carried out by Skopje.

That was the situation until 28 June 1948 when the organization of the Eastern European communist parties, the Cominform Bureau, passed a resolution which strongly criticized the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia for its nationalism and revisionism. That marked the beginning of a rift in the relations of Yugoslavia with the communist parties in the neighboring states. The Yugoslav emissaries including also the teachers in the so-called "Macedonian language" were extradited. In Pirin Macedonia only the Bulgarian literary language in its post-1945 orthographic form was used, and the refugees from Aegean Macedonia used as a basis the Kostur-Lerin-Prespa (Kastoria-Florina-Prespa) Bulgarian dialects to create a local regional variant written in the Bulgarian alphabet as well. Largely similar was the language situation in Albania where the regional variant was based on the local Prespa Bulgarian vernacular, also codified in the Bulgarian alphabet. The published grammars and textbooks of that regional variant

The *Ilinden* Newspaper published in the Kostur-Voden (Kastoria-Edessa) dialect with the use of the Bulgarian alphabet; publication of the political emigrants from Aegean Macedonia, №4, June – August 1954

The *Macedonian Tribune* Newspaper, publication of the Central Committee of the Macedonian Patriotic Organizations in the USA and Canada. Article dated 8 Jan. 1987

were purged from Serbian loanwords and were much closer to the Bulgarian literary language.

After 1955, taking advantage of the thaw in the relations with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia exerted pressure on the Eastern European countries to abandon the use of the Bulgarian regional variant and impose the use of the official language of Yugoslav Macedonia. Nevertheless, the publications of the refugees from South Macedonia in Eastern Europe continued to be released in the local dialects using the Bulgarian alphabet. In Albania the Bulgarian regional dialect of Prespa was used officially in the state educational system until 1991.

At the same time the old Macedono-Bulgarian emigrants to the Americas, Australia and Western Europe rejected all language changes that had taken place after 1945 and even nowadays, in some of their printed editions, they still stick to the old orthography of the Bulgarian literary language from before 1945.

Thus, in more than 62% of the region of Macedonia and among a large part of the emigrants from that region the use of the official

language of Yugoslav Macedonia was rejected and it remained in function only strictly within the Yugoslav Federation.

**The use of the official language in the Republic of North Macedonia itself** (called successively Democratic Federal Macedonia, People's Republic of Macedonia, Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Macedonia, and presently Republic of North Macedonia) has also been subject to dynamic changes determined by the respective ethnodemographic causes. The number of its speakers peaked in 1991 – 1,328,187, or 65% of the overall population of the country. In percentage figures the so-called "ethnic Macedonians" held the largest share in 1961 – 71%. Ever since their number and share have been constantly decreasing to reach, at the latest 2002 census, the figure of 1,297,981, or 64%. This result is an objective consequence of the specific ethnodemographic processes taking place among various ethnic groups comprising the population of the Republic of North Macedonia.

In line with the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Albanian has also been given the status of an official language since 2001. At municipal level the principle is that any language spoken by more than 20% of the population in a given municipality should be granted official status, alongside with the already constitutional official language. In March 2018, the Bill of the Use of Languages was put to the vote, and in January 2019, the Act was effected whereby Albanian was given an almost equal status to the already constitutional official language and practically became the second official language of the country. The Albanian language may not be used for official communication purposes of the Republic of North Macedonia with foreign states, but it enjoys almost equal status for internal use by that country's state institutions. All this creates serious challenges facing the first official language of the Republic of North Macedonia which is defined by its Constitution as "Macedonian language".

# X. THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF CONTEMPORARY BILATERAL RELATIONS

Most recently, the issue of the official language of the Republic of Macedonia has affected the bilateral relations between that country and Bulgaria.

As is well-known, Bulgaria has been actively supporting the cause of independence and stability of its southwestern neighbor. On 15 January 1992, it was the first to recognize the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, and in the months that followed it contributed to its recognition by other states, such as the Russian Federation. When on 6 February 1994, Greece imposed a trade embargo cutting off the only convenient sea outlet of the Republic of Macedonia to the world markets – via Thessaloniki, Bulgaria rendered full assistance and offered concessions for trade through the Port of Burgas which turned into the only legal maritime transport point for that country in 1994–1995 saving its imports of oil and other goods of vital importance.

Despite the extended helping hand, the leadership of the Republic of Macedonia tried to provoke "a language controversy" between the two countries. On 14 April 1994, during the visit of the Bulgarian Minister of Education Marko Todorov, the Republic of Macedonia refused to sign the official documents based on an already agreed and used formula with regard to the official languages of the two countries. A few days later, during his visit to Sofia, that country's President Kiro Gligorov did not sign the already prepared bilateral agreements, insisting on the "Bulgarian and Macedonian language" formula. Thus, the Republic of Macedonia insisted that the bilateral documents should formally recognize the independence of its official language in relation to Bulgarian and actually blocked the signing of the treaty and legal basis of the bilateral relations, which resulted in a five-year period of stagnation.

The then opposition grouped around the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (IMRO – DPMNU) became aware of the negative consequences of such a policy. Following an election victory in the autumn of 1998 and with the active participation of Deputy Minister of

Foreign Affairs Boris Trajkovski, the future President of the Republic of Macedonia, agreement was reached on the text of a fundamental joint document that would solve the language question. The agreed formulation was for ***"the official languages of the two countries – Bulgarian language, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, and Macedonian language, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia"***. Thus, a Joint Declaration was signed by prime ministers Ivan Kostov and Lyubcho Georgievski on 22 February 1999, which regulated and gave higher status to the relations between the two countries in the two decades that followed. Using this formulation, tens of bilateral agreements were signed. It was also incorporated into the Treaty of Friendship, Good-neighbourliness and Cooperation between the two countries signed on 1 August 2017 in Skopje.

With this formula, well established and widely accepted in bilateral and multilateral documents, due respect is paid to the language norm of the Republic of North Macedonia in its legal aspect, ensuing from the Constitution of that country. Its scientific and linguistic aspects are not subject to any consideration: **it remains the same Southwestern written regional norm of the Bulgarian language**.

# XI. CONCLUSIONS AND A ROAD MAP FOR THE BILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE SPHERES OF SCIENCE AND CULTURE

**The official language of the Republic of North Macedonia is a Southwestern written regional norm of the Bulgarian language; hence it can be designated as North Macedonian Bulgarian.**

– Language proximity requires strong cultural and media exchange between the two countries, ***without the need of "intralingual translation"***, including also forms of theatrical adaptations, films, literature, so that they will become mutually accessible and known on both sides of the border.

– It is necessary to guarantee ***free exchange of media products, academic and popular academic publications*** in the two neighboring countries.

– It is mandatory to require ***strict adherence to the objective scientific truth in the scientific contacts*** between the two countries, without any politicizing or paying lip service to old ideological dogmas.

The efforts for the consolidation of the official written norm in the Republic of North Macedonia on the basis of artificial confrontation with the Bulgarian literary language and distortion of its history cannot receive any favorable appraisal from Bulgarian society. **The basis of the official norm and the way in which it was codified and artificially imposed from above lend it the status of a variant, not of a separate language.** That does not prevent this norm from carrying out its function as a state language, and as the language of education and literature in the Republic of North Macedonia. To this end, however, the reflexes of the past should be overcome. The young state of the Republic of North Macedonia has the perspective to develop and move forward stepping on constructive work, without any need to seek support from a fabricated past.

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# APPENDIX
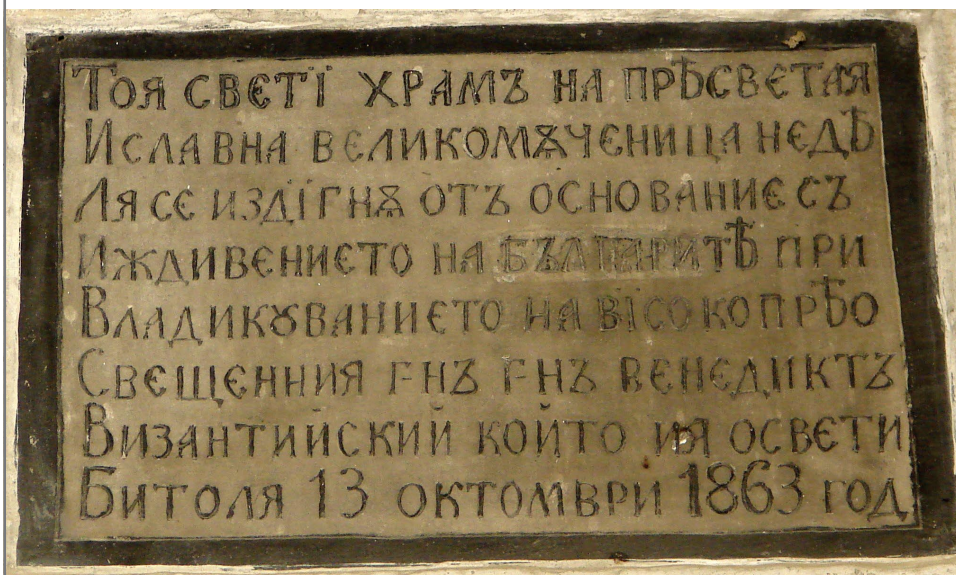
Stone inscription above the entrance of St. Nedelya Church in Bitola,
put in 1863 by the community of Bulgarians in the city,
before their separation from the Constantinople Patriarchate
and the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate.


The inscription reads:


**This house of God dedicated to the Holy
and Glorious Great Martyr Nedelya
was erected from its foundations
with the means of the Bulgarians
during the tenure of His Eminence
[Metropolitan]  Venedictos
Byzantios who consecrated it.
Bitola, 13 October 1863.**


In the twentieth century, the Yugoslav authorities tried to obliterate that piece
of Bulgarian heritage by erasing the word "Bulgarian", but it is still legible.

14. Народътъ

Възкръсна пакъ въ него великий копнежъ,
въ кръвьта му се плиска днесъ волни мечти,
и тѣлото смѣло издига въ копнежъ,
отхвърлилъ миражнитѣ ледни тъми.

Той помни веригитѣ турски, но тupъ
въ гръдьта му безспашно, жилично сърдце,
и огънь въвъ него гори, пламеный,
и обичь възпламва въвъ мъжко лице.

                        жестокия ньойски
Той помни ~~веригитѣ тур~~ диктатъ,
годинитѣ страшни и чернитѣ дни
когато камшика на страшния гладъ
душата му хвърли въвъ тежки беди.

Въ сърдцето той чува на Левски гласътъ
и вижда на Ботевъ метежния ликъ,
предъ себе си вижда днесъ новия пѫть,
на своята родина копнежътъ великъ.

Приютилъ въ гръдьта си завета лучистъ,
съсъ огънъ въвъ своитѣ лучисти очи,
той чака: свободенъ, и свѣтълъ и чистъ,
да брани страната отъ злитѣ беди.

Той помни лъчитѣ на Златния вѣкъ,
на царь Самуила великата мощь,
той помни царь Петра и нега му мечъ
и гръцката злоба въвъ робската нощь.

Manuscript of the poem *The People* by Aleksandar Karamanov

Aleksandar (Atso) Karamanov (1927–1944) was a talented young poet who perished tragically when he was a mere 17 years old. He wrote a big part of his poetry in the Bulgarian literary language. He was born in the town of Radovish (in the southeastern part of today's Republic of North Macedonia). He lived and studied in Skopje. In his poem he presents the heroic and dramatic destiny of his Bulgarian people – from the "Golden Age" of Tsar Simeon the Great and the "great power" of Tsar Samuil and Tsar Petar to the "rebellious image" of Hristo Botev and the prophetic voice of Levski, and further on to the "merciless dictate of Neuilly". Together with his other works and diary, the manuscript is kept in the Archives of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Skopje. The poem was published by A. Yordanov (The Unknown *Aleksandar Karamanov*. Poetry. Essays. Diary. Sofia, 2018).

# MAP OF THE DIALECT DIVISION

Р У М

Видин
Кула
Дунав
Лом
Оряхово
Алексинъц
Княжевъц
Белоградчик
белоград-чишки говор
видинско–ломски говор
белослатинско– говор
Бяла Слатина
Червен бряг
Луко
Монтана
Берковица
Враца
Мездра
Искър
врачански говор
ботевградски говор
тетевен говор
Ниш
моравски говори
Пирот
Царибродски
Ботевград
източно-софийски (елинпелински) говор
Пирд
пирдопски говор
Лесковъц
царибродски говор
Трън
брез-нишки говор
Сливница
западно-софийски говор
Елин Пелин
трънски говор
Брезник
София
ихтимански говор
Пана
панаге говор
Перник
Враня
Босилеград
босиле-градски говор
дупнишки говор
Самоков
самоковски говор
ихтимански говор
Па
К О С О В О
скопскоцърногорски говор
Кюстендил
кюстендилски говор
Дупница
г





горански говор
Кукъс
Тетово
тетовски говор
кумановско–кратовски говор
Куманово
Кратово
Благоевград
разложки говор
Велинград
рекански говор
Гостивар
гостиварски говор
Галичник
Скопие
Велес
Щип
Делчево
благоевградски говор
Разлог
бабяшки говор
чепински говор
дебърско–галичнишки говор
Дебър
Кичево
Негoтино
Пехчево
Радовиш
гоце-делчевски говор
Гоце Делчев
охридско–стружки говор
Р
велешко–прилепско–битолски говор
Прилеп
Негoтино
негoтински говор
Струмица
Петрич
чечки говор
радожденско–вевчански говор
Струга
Охрид
Охридско езеро
Битоля
мариовски говор
гевгелийски говор
Гевгели
Валовица
Сяр
серски говори
драмски говори
Драма
Зиляхово
преспански говор
Преспанско езеро
лерински говор
Лерин
кукушко–воденски говор
Енидже Вардар
Воден
Кукуш
Ц
Р
корчански говор
Корча
Костур
костурски говор
Кайляр
солунски говор
Солун

С Ъ Р Б И Я
М А К Е Д О Н И Я
Б А Л К А Н
Морава
Вардар
Струма
Места
Црна

Дунав

Тулча

Северна Добруджа

Кюстенджа

Черно море

Дунав

Силистра

**гребенски говор**

Русе

Кубрат

Исперих

Добрич

северен павликянски говор

Никопол

Свищов

Плевенски

Вит

Плевен

Осъм

Павликени

**капански говор**

Разград

Осъм

Янтра

Шумен

Нови пазар

Провадия

**еркечки говор**

Варна

Ловеч

**централен балкански говор**

Севлиево

Велико Търново

Дряново

**шуменски говор**

Преслав

**сртски говор**

Троян

Габрово

Трявна

Елена

**котелско–еленско–дряновски говор**

Котел

Камчия

южен павликянски говор

Карлово

Калофер

Казанлък

Тунджа

Сливен

**източен подбалкански (сливенски) говор**

Ямбол

Бургас

Черно море

Стара Загора

**западен подбалкански говор**

Чирпан

Пловдив

Елхово

**факийска група говори**

**странджански говор**

Малко Търново

Асеновград

**говор на Рупката**

Хасково

Тополовград

**северни тракийски говори**

Свиленград

**одрински говор**

**лозенградски говор**

Лозенград

**визенски говор**

Мидия

**широколъшки говор**

Одрин

**смолянски говор**

Смолян

Крумовград

Ивайловград

**девесилски говор**

Бунархисар

**бабаес-кийски говор**

**бунар-хисарски говор**

Златоград

**тихомирски говор**

**димотишки говор**

Димотика

Бабаески

ксантийски говор

Ксанти

**Златоградски говор**

Узункьопрю

**узункьоприйски говор**

Софлу

**софлийски говор**

Т

У

Р

Ц

И

Я

**чаталджански говор**

Чорлу

Чаталджа

Гюмюрджина

**гюмюрджински говор**

Малгара

Кешан

**кешански говор**

Дедеагач

**дедеагачки говор**

Енос

Бяло море

Мраморно море

Мраморно море

Бяло море

Бига

**малоазийски говори**

Мала Азия

Back cover:

*A 14th century miniature in a Middle Bulgarian translation*
*of The Chronicle of Constantine Manasses. Vatican copy*
*(Cod. Vaticano Slavo 2. f. 183v)*

**The text reads:**

*Emperor Basil defeated Samuil, Tsar of the Bulgarians. He blinded fifteen*
*thousand Bulgarians. And when Tsar Samuil saw the blind, he died of grief.*

ⰅⰎⰜⰉⰇ ⰘⰑⰘⰐⰀ ⰃⰅⰀⰎ ⰒⰀⰉⰑⰎⰂ ⰃⰐⰀⰒⰑⰝ ⰒⰑⰔ ⰎⰕⰅ
ⰘⰐⰀⰉⰎⰀ ⰑⰗ ⰒⰎⰐⰀⰃⰐⰀⰀ

ⰠⰐⰀⰂⰊⰠ ⰔⰀⰎⰑⰐⰀ ⰜⰓⰖ ⰑⰔⰎⰏ
ⰒⰅⰐⰐ ⰔⰀⰘⰀⰐⰐ
ⰡⰏⰓⰕⰀ