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**Enforced linguistic conversion:
translation of the Macedonian toponyms
in the 20th century**

Introductory preface

At the end of 20th century, the theory of literature started intersecting its cognitive passions with cultural theories in few recognizable interpretative matrices, such as New Historicism, Cultural materialism, historiographic metafiction, as well as the anthropological, feminist and postcolonial approach, and, in this context, the so-called poetics of nomadism. This concrete matrix of nomadism managed to dislocate to the foreground, the primordial places of movement, of traveling, of homelessness, of the act of taking away somebody's home, of the inner exile – in a word, the generic topic of translocation (dislocation) of individuals, of people and cultures in time and space. The dislocation of one entity/object from one (essentially original, natural, hereditary) to another place (world, country, language, religion, gender), implies additional motives, a Surplus which can be dramatic, and even tragic for the surviving of the individual.

The setting of the theme of dislocation to the foreground, in literary frames, initiated great interest in certain travel genres/discourses, and with that, for an appropriate narrative style in which fiction entangles with non-fiction. So, today, literature abounds with a massive corpus of quasi-fictional texts which have pretensions to be novels, but, to a great extent, are considered as travelogues, autobiographies, memoirs, chronicles, family sagas, essayist narrations, intertextual collages. In a way, the topic of dislocation has discreetly created new mappings, and trivializations as well, of the borders of literary and artistic discourse, adopting the marginal narratives, the documentary and non-fictional genres as literary. This produced a dislocation in the literary system itself, under the pretext of hybrids, collages, *mélanges*, *bricolages*. Namely, para-literary hybrids operate under the principle of dissociation from the space of traditional literary identities.

Aspects of dislocation

The term dislocation is synonymous with the Latin term *luxatio* (*luxare* – to dislocate, *luxus* – dislocated) and it focuses, on the one hand, on a sudden and often violent displacement of an object or entity from its primary setting, as a consequence of a contusion/fracture; on the other hand it implies a state of luxation, lacking one's place/home, of exodus, exile. There are certain physical and metaphysical dislocations as well – the first take place in a real geographical and historical space, while the other take place in the area of fiction, in an imaginary space.

But, every dislocation in physical space/territory has an effect on other, meta-spatial levels – temporal, psychological, existential, cultural, political, as well as in the fields of genre, style... Namely, the dislocation is not just a spatial transfer, but a transfer in meaning and identification of the object/entity which is being transferred (displaced). Dislocation means re-evaluation; it is a process of re-naming, of conversion, of border changes, of new mappings, new narrations, new visions, new worlds, that are not at all naive, particularly when it happens via violent means, sometimes conceptual, and sometimes verified by state institutions (by constitutional and legal acts).

Observed in literary frames, the process of dislocation creates different constellations between reality and fiction, sometimes even radical, such as the example of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. In this novel, the main character is being dislocated from one territorial and temporal space to another, transforming his gender, his cultural and ethnic identity in an extremely exotic way, discreetly indicating the possibility of reincarnation. With a fascinating ease

he transcends the real, borderline frames of historical time/space, because he moves in an imaginary space/time in the novel, which dislocates the boundaries beyond any rational notions. He shows that the stepping into eternity is characteristic for the imaginary space, not for the real one, but the imaginary space is a man's *creation* – therefore it is available for communication, for narration and for interpretation. So, here we have an example of an ecstatic dislocation in fictional eternity, if we do not forget that by ecstasy we conceive the exit out of oneself, out of an original state, out of one's fixed identity. That kind of dislocation in the real world is impossible or traumatic, but it is possible, if not imminent, in imaginary space, in literary fiction and in dreams. The imaginary space is structured to bear even the most amazing dislocations with shocking metaphysical and semantic implications.

If we observe luxation/dislocation as a chronotopic category, then we will easily uncover its ambiental character, its historical, socio-cultural, semiotic, psychological and mental aspects. Dislocation happens as an attempt to exit certain physical and spiritual space, to map once again that psycho-physical space, the Body which is never just physical, but metaphysical and imaginary as well. As prelude to a new mapping, dislocation becomes a form of renewed interpretation of the reality – in historical, as well as in a cultural sense. When the borders of reality are displaced, the borders of the fantastic are also displaced. In a certain time, an interaction between them happens, i.e., the spaces of reality and of the fantastic are reviewed amongst one another (between themselves). In that context, an overflow happens – from the structures of the unconscious to the conscious and vice versa¹.

When dislocation happens within social frames, its dark side becomes evident, beginning with the fact that things are relocated from one place to another, from the natural to the unnatural, from one's own to the foreign, mainly as a consequence of a certain violent pressure, of a specific cut, of an operation or intervention with obvious or ulterior use of force. Even the most natural things can be deformed under certain social and historical circumstances. Thus we come to the conclusion that there are two types of dislocation – natural and violent ones. We recognize the natural dislocation in the flow of energy and humans (such is the concept of metempsychosis or **transmigration of the soul**), and the violent dislocation is seen through various displacements, expulsions, transmigrations, exiles and exoduses, as a consequence of an organized, deliberate pressure and compulsion, even when/if it is put in the most sophisticated verbal and legal wrapping.

¹ Б. А. Успенский, J. М. Лотман, *Миф – имя – культура*, [in:] Б. А. Успенски, *Избранные труды*, т. 1, *Семиотика истории. Семиотика культуры*, Москва 1996, с. 433–459.

Historically seen, the dislocation of people has a complex phenomenology and it is assigned in few dominant forms (types), such as – nomadism, migrations, migrant-working (gastarbeiters) and exodus, in the exchange of population, exiles and asylum, and inner migrations. We can immediately see that all these forms of dislocation are due to some social (and political) events that are motivated by some existential interests. But, we can also note that there is an essential differentiation between the known forms of dislocation. Some types of dislocation appear as a matter of choice, while others are imposed by force; some of them are motivated by socio-economical goals (the migrant-working, migrations), while others are political (exodus, population exchange, exile, asylum).

Nomadism versus migrations and exodus

Nomadism is socio-economically marked, but it contains a philosophical dimension (style/way of life, a specific approach towards space, non-commitment towards certain space, commitment/dependence on the movement itself, an identity which is formed as an act towards repetition of breaking spatial frames). At this point, one phenomenon is evident: populations living in large latitudes or ones which adopt the big and alien spaces as their own, are concentrated – when they are settled on a certain place, for a longer period – on a limited (localized) space (carpets, tents, miniature imitations of houses)².

Nomadism is a form of existence that evokes sympathies and it has become a parable for the series of de-centered creative and ideological practices. Nomadism redesigns the term center itself, and the term margin. The nomadic mental and existential constitution/code is established in the act of cyclical, periodical movement from one place to another. Nomadism is different from certain types of dislocations that are identified as migrations, because migrations are non-cyclical and they refer to a (often permanent) movement in a new place of residence³, whereas nomadism happens systematically in de-

² Mihail Epstein has written a wonderful essay on Russian's ability to experience space. The essay focuses on Russians which live on Siberia, in that almost limitless space, and yet, they are described as sleeping all together in one room, side by side, many of them in one single space. See: *On the Totalitarianism of Ideas*, "New England Review" 2002, vol. 23, no. 2.

³ As an example, we can mention the migrations of Russian's white guardists (belogardejci) after the October Revolution in 1917 to Macedonia, which ended with a quiet acculturation, with a language and cultural adaptation of Russians amongst Macedonians. The migration is an introduction to a cultural and a language conversion.

terminated periods, which are linked to the means of survival of some nations and populations⁴. Nomadic migrations are temporal and include a return to the old residence, which means they imply a certain reference point in the personal space (home) one has. For example, there are some nations on the Balkans, such as Vlachs (Aromanians), where we can encounter elements of nomadism until recent past, and in others, as is the example of Slavic people, there is a constant syndrome of Migration; today Macedonians are treated as displaced people, even though they populated territories of ethnic Macedonia between the 5th and 6th century⁵. That is a long enough period for them to be seen as endogenous to that particular space.

Nomadism is different from migrations, because it is performed cyclically and periodically within the frames of a wide, but recognizable space. Nomadic transmigrations are temporal and they imply a return to the old residence, which means there is a certain referent point of possessing a home (on the Balkans, with some nations, such as the Vlachs/Aromanians, there were elements of nomadism in the past⁶).

Rarely in history, great nations' migrations transpire in specific circumstances (invasions, natural catastrophes, exiles). Several great nations' migrations are known in the world, particularly in the area of the European and Balkan countries. During the great invasions and migrations, the conflict situation was settled through assimilation and adaptation of language, religion, customs, laws, political organisation of the new-comers, which was the basis for creating a mixture of traditional commons, beliefs, memories, culture and language⁷.

The 20th century saw an increase in massive migrations from the Balkans towards Western-European countries and Australia, America and Canada, in several periods: after the First and the Second World War, in military conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia at the end of 20th century and after 2001 in Macedonia. These are periods of conflict, of economical and political crisis,

⁴ In Macedonia and on the Balkan, the Aromanians (Vlachs, Tzintzari) were considered a nomadic nation in the past, considering their regular annual movements because of sheep farming. Roma people were considered as nomads in the past as well, but in this case we have in mind a differently coded nomadism. See: *Aspects of the Balkans: Continuity and Change*, ed. C. H. Van Schooneveld, The Hague/Paris 1972.

⁵ Z. Gołąb, *O pochodzeniu Słowian w świetle faktów językowych*, tłum. M. Wojtyła-Świerzowska, Kraków 2004.

⁶ J. Цвијиќ, *Балканско полуострво и јужнословенске земље. Сабрана дела*, књ. 2, Београд 1987.

⁷ See: *Geography and ethnic geography of the Balkans to 1500*, <http://www.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lecture1.html>

without any perspective. In 1906, Henry Brailsford wrote: “In a country that has to be one of the richest tiers of Europe, villagers sink into hopeless poverty, so they catch way underfoot. They leave their century-old homes or they die for them. Displaced, scattered, divided, strayed to Levant, to America, Australia, Austria, Romania [...]. The villagers are serfs without leisure, without security and without rights. Shy and suspicious, under a constant, everyday oppression, which torments the peasantry more than the poignant, horrific and mass misdoings, those conditions crush their spirit, their wit, their humanity and it made them what they are today – an enraged nation – slaves”⁸.

Dislocation is utterly specific when expressed as an exodus (including the Holocaust), in violent and traumatic forms which affect great ethnic populations. Violent dislocations are a form of personal and collective tragedy. They correspond to the physical, the mental and psychic, anthropological and ethnological body of the subject, or of the collective. They have always been present in history of the humankind, which implies that they are not just a part of modern phenomena. We can consider them as certain forms of an archetype of traumatic separation – of the individual, as well of the collective entity. According to Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), the archetypal form is not inherited as a formed existence, but it is a predisposition of the human mind to re-generate the state of physical, linguistic and spiritual exile and exodus.

At the turn of the 20th into the 21th century, postcolonial forms of dislocation were treated as an exotic, as well as a prestigious existential modus, as a way out of the closed circle of conservative traditions of attachment to territory (land) and home. Theoretically and practically, constructs of unstable, variable and plural identity (of the subject, of society, of historical truth) were highly promoted⁹. Ethnic nomadism appeared in a multicultural form and was received, in certain circles, as something prestigious. But, in order for something to be seen as prestigious it has to be a part of individual or collective nostalgia, to be set as a parameter of identification. At this point, however, we should note that the more one emphasizes nostalgia and longing towards a nomadic way of life,

⁸ H. N. Brailsford, *Macedonia. Its Races and its Future*, London 1906. Macedonian edition: X. H. Брејлсфорд, *Македонија. Нејзините народи и нејзината иднина*, превод Љ. Тодорова-Јаншлиева, В. Христова, Скопје 2002, с. 113.

⁹ Multiple identities present a migration from one identity to another, from one culture to another, and this process of transmigration implies a deficiency of inner stability. Therefore, individuals who experience these migrations are in a state of continual conversion, with a sense of an absence of a background story, a mega-story or a macro-narrative. In that context, we can pinpoint as an example the dubious, quasi-narratives of migrates, of alien (foreign) nations. See: *Македонското прашање*, ред. В. Рудометоф, превод Н. Митревска, Скопје 2003.

the more one accentuates its compensatory role (physic, social, ethnic, cultural, creative role). Excessive nostalgia towards the unstable and the changeable/transient is as symptomatic as everything else which is excessive. Absence of identity becomes an identity itself, or we should say “quasi-identity”.

Thus, exotic interpretations of dislocations and de-centralization made a contribution towards great variety of unstable and, with that, suspicious identities. But, the identity itself implies a minimal recognition in its function, in its essence, and even in its form. The condition of existence of certain anthropological, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national, regime, ideological, political and artistic identity, lies in the stability of the identification factor of one subject/object, compared to other subjects/objects, in terms of spatial, historical, structural, functional, phenomenological and ontological formulations. Maybe unstable and hybrid identities, which have become generic categories, are considered exotic, more than they are specific categories of existence¹⁰. Occasionally, existence between variations of fragmented identities – personal and collective – can be considered exotic, when seen from aside, but that often produces schizophrenic subjects and entities which have no other choice than to eject from one end to another, swaying on the opposite (schismatic) sides of a bench¹¹.

The deprivation of the spirit of history is a pathological condition of territories, where history is an integral part of modern identity. Namely, if history implies an existence of a story and an official version of the past, then history is immanently historiographic, and the civilization – immanently linguistic. The prehistoric period is relatively dark, not because of deficiency of material evidences, but because it lacks original, linguistic monuments. Post-history should be an entrance to a period which should not demand new stories and

¹⁰ New forms of migrations can change the fixed maps of cultural identity and create something called hyphenated identities (we encounter common examples of this on the Internet, such as – V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, Taslima Nasrin, Hanif Kureishi, Margaret Atwood, Toni Morrison, as well as writers such as Iosif Brodsky, Milan Kundera, Eugène Ionesco).

¹¹ This reminds me of a short German story which focuses on a woman who travels every single day on a relation between two cities, so we do not really know where she lives, where is she from, because her home is, in fact, the train itself and the very situation of traveling – or dislocation – from one town to another. Indeed wonderful as an anecdote. As a parabola of the need for traveling, of the unwillingness to face the reality which sometimes is not that mystical as it may seem, as a parabola of a choice for one to do nothing except engage in a process of continuous travel. I can imagine how such a person would look like, a person which travels just because the sake of traveling (traveling-for-traveling) on a certain location between two cities in Macedonia, using rail transport, the one inherited from today's god forsaken, pathologic times, in which something indeed was build!

new interpretations, because it fixes and centralizes those dominant and official stories, constructs and interpretations of history, without giving them the chance to be corrected from the position of marginalized social subjects. Post-history firstly establishes its own world view, then she dogmatizes it, packing it in universally accepted democratic formulas offering it as one global axiom.

Still, current tendencies to accept different stories which call forth the syndrome of existence of a history in the history itself, are strong, which, – again – results with a syndrome of over-evaluation.

Global historical constructs are threatened by numerous local and individual versions, as well as interpretations. We step into an era of polyphonic, multifocal interpretation. The positions of the centers of power, which were established at the end of 19th century and dominant in the 20th century, are now shaken. That which was behind the scenes is now moved to the foreground. The code of neo-imperialism is de-mystified, and the sophisticated alphabet of neo-colonialism is already deciphered. There is a hope for the endangered languages, but only if they strengthen their own immunity, strengthening, at the same time, civilization's legitimate institutions, regulations and practices.

Translation of toponyms as a process of violent dislocation

One of the main indicators of violent and systematic dislocation, lies in the intervention and displacement of toponyms from one language to another, their translation via law acts, established under strategies of revision of historical and civilization facts for the inherited cultural heritage – material and non-material (immovable and movable). The case of violent toponym conversion is seen as a form of linguistically violent and cultural dislocation. The toponyms are not just eminently linguistic, but a part of civilization's memory as well, of nations and of humankind and that is why they are protected with international regulations.

The conversions of Macedonian toponyms are just a step towards a systematic negation of the Macedonian linguistic and cultural identity, and with that, they deny the right of Macedonian people for their own national country. Every negation lies under the intention of re-interpreting and retouching the historical reality.

Inherited toponyms in one country are not necessarily linguistically related to the official language of the country itself, because country borders do not correspond to linguistic/cultural/ethnic borders. But, if they are accepted by the local peoples, they should be conserved as a present, cultural heritage – which means, they should not be changed by means of violence. Alien toponyms (or

foreign toponyms) serve as stylistic and semantic indicators of stratified history and culture. They present a text in a text, a language within a language, a world within a world, in a given social reality, but not a nomenclature. They are considered vestiges of ancient civilizations, testimonies of the construction of different civilizations in one space, which implies that that space has the capacity for different cultures, if there is enough plausible time and nations with civilizational predispositions. If all historical traces are erased, the process will result with zombie spaces, deprived from sense, from style, from soul, character, destiny and history¹².

Every translation of geographical names and terms, from one language to another, is often made between languages with different systematic affiliations, by law and as a result of force usage, as a form of state violence over collective cultural memory and over the inherited, non-material cultural heritage which, declaratively, is under UN and UNESCO's protection¹³. Toponym translation is a violent dislocation in the space of language and culture, par excellence. The act of translating toponyms (lat. *translatio*) from one language to another, within the frames of culturally and ethnically marked space, is undeniable violence against the cultural heritage. Toponym translation is seen as a violent erase of linguistic and cultural memory, as an attempt to construct a new world based on quasi-humanistic principles. If toponyms present a mirror of linguistic, cultural and ethnic identity and space, then by translating them, we destroy that mirror and we create conditions for improper identifications and misprojections of reality. Not to mention the individual and the collective frustrations!

Moreover, toponym translation entails a necessary revision of the existing geographic maps. Because we move in space not only physically, but also visually and imaginary, and with the help of information and labels which identify the territory, we can come to a conclusion that mapping is extremely important. Cartography presents a simulacrum of the geographical, real space. If a territory experiences legally sanctioned radical changes of name identifications overnight, the population of the same territory will become disoriented and will experience a state of identificational shock¹⁴.

¹² В. Н. Топоров, *Балканский макроконтекст и древнебалканская нео-энеолитическая цивилизация (общий взгляд)*, [in:] *Материалы к VI международному конгрессу по изучению стран Юго-Восточной Европы, София, 30 VIII – 6 IX 1989*, Москва 1989.

¹³ Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Hague Convention, 1972; <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext>

¹⁴ UN have held more than ten conferences on the topic of standardization of geographic names of settlements and regions, mountains, rivers, lakes, all known as toponyms and oikonyms, oronyms, hydronyms. UN's bulletin no. 374, of 1997, suggests that a state's name

Subject to violent renaming are often macro toponyms, because micro toponyms are more resistant, more difficult to change as long as the same territory is populated by the native population. Micro toponyms are directly linked to the everyday, with population's local conscience on one territory. Revisionist projects focused on macro toponyms are seen as a break in civilization's system, a devil's pact. To become a part of speech practices, e.g., in some areas a population exchange was performed (during the 1920s, in northern Greece) sanctioned by law and interstate agreements, which effected with violent relocations and persecution of indigenous Slavic population, unprecedented in recent European history¹⁵.

Enforced luxation of toponyms through their translation from one language to another, sanctioned by law acts, is "culture-cide". It makes an attempt to revise historical facts and historical memories. Toponyms can be transcribed onto a different alphabet, letter-by-letter (transliteration), but should not be translated, especially not on the territory which is their civilization's cradle, where they are practiced and inherited. No doubt, violent conversion is an introduction to conversion of historical narratives and modern ethno-cultural identities, so that is why it has geo-strategic implications.

History shows that there are violent forms of linguistic, cultural, religious and ethnic dislocations, including the change of state borders when entire ethnic ensembles are divided and classified into different state entities, with different linguistic and cultural identity. Such is the case with the Bucharest Treaty in 1913, when Macedonia's "geographic region was divided between her neighbours – Greece (51%), Serbia (34%) and Bulgaria (15%)". That division was confirmed in 1919, in addition to Serbia, with Neilly's Treaty signed near Paris¹⁶. This "fly in place" of Macedonian people had consequences on the Balkan's contemporary situations, especially in those which refer to the "Macedonian question"¹⁷.

Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, the territories in the triangle Macedonia – Albania – Greece are disfigured because of interventions of extreme cosmetic character. The example of radical dislocation of Macedonian

should be accepted as established in its Constitution. Yet, in 1993, UN's General Assembly made a decision by which Macedonia was given a temporary reference (Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia), instead of adopting her constitutional name.

¹⁵ Д. Литоксоу, *Грчка антимакедонска борба. Од Илинден до Загоричани (1903–1905)*, Скопје 2004.

¹⁶ According to Selishchev, approximately around 1200 geographic names/settlements in Albania had/had had Slavic character at the beginning of the 21st century (*Slavic population in Albania*). See: А. М. Селишчев, *Славјанско население в Албаниа*, Софија 1931.

¹⁷ *Македонското прашање...*, с. 81.

toponyms (linguistically identified as Slavic as well) is probably one of the few in modern history. It has been taking place over an almost entire century – from the 1920's to 21st century's first decade. Macedonian toponyms, for centuries present on the territory of ethnic Macedonia (for which there is indisputable evidence), are being dislocated from their original linguistic/cultural context, in the context of several state entities – Greek, Albanian, and – paradoxically – Macedonian¹⁸. Instead of transcribing, by using the Latin alphabet or other alphabets based on the transliteration principle (letter-by-letter), Macedonian toponyms and oikonyms are translated. Toponym translation presents a violent exile or exodus from one world to a completely new world, into different (foreign) linguistic and semantic spaces.

The dislocation of Macedonian toponyms from their original context, situated in the Macedonian language, to Greek or Albanian is violence and desecration of Macedonia's cultural heritage and it becomes a form of revision of the truth with long-term consequences. It is a known fact that for over a century, Macedonian toponyms and Macedonian culture as well, have been subjected to a systematic Hellenisation and Albanisation [translator's note: something to be converted into Greek or Albanian, no matter its origin] – and reactions of this “culture-cide” act are local and minimal¹⁹.

On August 16th, 2004, in the “Official Gazette” no. 55 the Law of territorial organization of the local self-management in the Republic of Macedonia was published, both in Macedonian and in Albanian. In the Albanian translation of the Law, the Macedonian toponyms were subjected to translation into Albanian, which violated international standards for toponyms as immovable cultural heritage.

Modern Macedonians in the regions of ethnic Macedonia are witnesses of an uncivilized act of violent dislocation of Macedonian toponyms in the Greek and Albanian language (we shall not mention the question of personal names, although it is also a part of the process of de-identification of Macedonian people). Over a thousand toponyms have been translated into

¹⁸ И. Петрушевски, *Речник на топоними*, Скопје 1950.

¹⁹ As an illustration, we shall mention one Greek source, a publication of the Greek Ministry for National Economy – Statistic board is included a graphic chart with Macedonian population with “distinctively Slavic beliefs” (there are Macedonians with non-Greek nationality, ones with Greek and ones with fluid national beliefs). There is a graphic chart of an exarchate Macedonian village. There are arguments of the existence of Macedonians – exarchates (Bulgarophils) and Macedonians – patriarchates (Greekophils). There is also an example of Macedonian Muslim population, and population with distinctive Aromanian beliefs (Vlachs); *Recount of the Greek residents in the new vicinities for 1913*, Athens 1915.

Greek and Albanian, and in some cases they were completely removed (banned), while in other cases, they were in a parallel usage with their original Macedonian form. We can mention several examples, because the list of revoked toponyms is enormous and can be put in a whole book, a black book of the Macedonian language and a grotesque testimony of the deformed humanity of contemporary civilization. Some indicators show that in today's Greece (in the regions of Aegean Macedonia), a total evaluation of 1666 names of cities, settlements and villages have been changed, in the period of 1918 to 1970, and in the 20s and 40s of the 20th century (especially in 1926, 1927 and 1928 – 1487 toponyms were changed / (re-named). The change of these toponyms is systematic, as a strategic duty of the new state of Greece, which has been granted with New Lands (Aegean Macedonia) after the Bucharest Treaty. On the territory of Aegean Macedonia, most of the population was composed of Slavs, with Macedonian origin (with partial exarchate or Bulgarophil national sense), and one part of Vlachs (Pind)²⁰. The first exchange consisted of sub-

²⁰ Thus in the period from 1918 to 1925 inclusive, 76 centres of population in Aegean Macedonia were renamed: in 1918 – one; in 1919 – two; in 1920 – two; in 1921 – two; in 1922 – eighteen; in 1923 – eighteen; in 1924 – six and in 1925 – twenty-six. But as soon as the processes of migration came to an end and the position of the state was strengthened, and, following the legislative orders of 17th September 1926, published in the “Government Gazette” 21.09.1926, no. 2331, and the Decision of the Ministerial Council dated 10th November 1927, and published in the “Government Gazette” 13.11.1927, no. 2 287, the process of renaming the inhabited places was accelerated to an incredible degree. Consequently, in the course of 1926 440 places in Aegean Macedonia were renamed, 1927 – 835 and in 1928 – 212. By the end of 1928 most of the centres of population in Aegean Macedonia had been given new names, but the Greek state continued the process by a gradual perfection of the system of renaming, effected through new laws and new instructions. On 13th March 1929 the special law known under its number, 4096, was passed and published in the “Government Gazette” 13.03.1929, no 99. This law contained detailed instructions and directives as to the process of renaming places. By the force of this law and the earlier instructions, amended by Law no 6429 of 18th June 1935, Law no 1418 of 22th November 1938, Law no 2697 of 4th December 1945 and many other instructions, legislative orders and other enactments, the process of renaming the inhabited areas has been carried on to this day, taking care of each and every geographical name of suspicious origin throughout Macedonia, including entirely insignificant places, all aimed at erasing any possible Slav trace from Aegean Macedonia and from the whole of Greece. With these laws, instructions and other enactments, the district commissions in charge of the change of place names and the Principal Commission at the Ministerial Council of Greece (established as early as 1909) enforced many more changes. In the period from 1929 to 1940 inclusive, another 39 places in Aegean Macedonia were renamed, and after World War II (up to 1979 inclusive) yet another 135 places in this part of Macedonia were renamed. An estimated total of 1666 cities, towns and villages were renamed in Aegean Macedonia in the period from 1918 to 1970 inclusive. This number does not include those inhabited places the renaming of

jects of Turkish and Bulgarian population (where 30 000 citizens were exiled or forced to migrate, based on Neilly's Treaty signed by Bulgaria and Greece for a willing departure, i.e. dislocation or resettlement of the population). After that a special *Guide* was adopted, which was focused on specifications for the change of toponyms, and after that, in 1920, the Ministry published a guidebook for re-naming of geographic names²¹; in the period from 1918 to 1970, numerous laws were adopted, that related to the change of settlements, mountains, rivers (names which contained a name of a saint, and so on, were only adapted to Greek and they were not a part of this number of renamed toponyms)²². Here we will give just a short list of changed names: Voden in Edessa, Rupishta in Arkos Orestikon, Postol in Pella, Libanovo in Aeginon, Larigovo in Arnea, on the Arnis island; Vrtikop in Skidra, Valovishta in Sidi-rokastron, Kutlesh in Virgina, Kostur in Castoria, Lerin in Florina, Kukush in Kilkis, the river Vardar in Axios, Bistrica in Aliakmon, Galik in Erigon, the lake Gorchilovo in Pikrolimi, the mountain Pijavica in Stratonikon, Grbovica in Atos/Sveta Gora in Agion Oros, Karakamen in Vermion, Valovishte in Eparhija Sindikis and many more.

On the territory of (modern) Albania, if we agree with the numerous reference sources²³, Slavic toponyms are undoubtedly among the oldest (together with Aromanian), because after the settlement, the Albanian population continued using the same names and they changed them over time. They have been alive for centuries, although from epoch to epoch, from empire to empire, they experienced transformations via Latinization (in the Roman Empire), Helenization (in the Byzantium Empire) and Turkization (in the Ottoman Empire)²⁴.

which has not been announced in the "Government Gazette", which has been taken as the exclusive source for the figures and the dynamics of renaming given here by years and districts. Neither does it include the numerous Macedonian settlements named after saints, the names of which official Greece simply translated from the Macedonian into the Greek language. See: <http://makedonija.name/history/aegean-macedonia-names-toponyms>

²¹ N. Politis, *Advice on the Change of the Names of Municipalities and Villages*, Athens 1920.

²² M. Мазовер, *Балканот – кратка историја*, Скопје 2002; P. J. Nixon, *Ideology in Balkan Anthropological Research*, „Anthropology Today” 1997, no. 13/2.

²³ Here we can mention the process of Latinization, because in order something to be Latinized, it has to be inherited from previous periods and cultures, which leaves open the question whether Slavic toponyms do not have older origin (6th to 7th century). See: *Communications. Septième congrès international d'études sud-est européen* (Thessalonique, 29 août – 4 septembre 1994), Athènes 1994.

²⁴ I believe that the term Western Balkan promoted after the fall of Yugoslavia and the border changes in those areas, which came as a result after a series of conflicts, is an attempt to

Slavic vocabulary (Macedonian and Serbian; according to some sources though, the Macedonian part is referred to as Bulgarian), on the territories of the Western Balkans (Albanian area)²⁵, was dominant in several spheres of existence (agriculture, trade, craftsmanship...) until the beginning of the 20th century and the formation of the Albanian state (1918).

The older Roman and Byzantine geographic charts/maps of Balkan territories and of the so-called Western Balkans (which inclines toward Albania), as well as in several Charts (old Slavic name is 'hrisovulji') of Serbian, Montenegrin and Austro-Hungarian rulers (King Dushan, Stefan Urosh III, King Alfons) hundreds of Slavic toponyms have been identified (Gorane, Babjane, Luzane, Smokva, Slatino, Velja Glava, Radogoshta, Bor, Slepipotok, Mechina, Tlsto brdo, Zrkovo, Vratnica, Ribniva, Breg, Belica, Gradec, Topala, Glava, Suva Gora, Cherna/Crna Gora, Gorica, Vele Pole, Visoka, Janica, Grnchari/Grchari, Grnec, Cherepec, Lonchari, Krvari, Prevez, Izvor, etc.). According to the processes of assimilation, conversion and "de-slavization" of Albanian territories in their different types of migration, these names have been changed, because of 20th century's specific legislatives and the creation of the new national Balkan states²⁶. According to certain resources, the Skadar area is the richest with Slavic names, as well as the area around Ohrid-Prespa. Due to an analysis dating from the 14th century, over 90% of the population of today's Albania bore names with Slavic etymology, and, most likely, with Slavic origin. We shall list just a few Slavic toponyms here which have been changed, some of them by legal acts in the new Albanian state, from Slavic to Albanian: Sveta Gorica in Zuadigoriza, Pistul in Pista Gjader, Brodec in Vau, Montenegro in Mali i Zi, Shiroki Brod in Vau i Lezhes, Gladra river in Gjader, Gorica/Korica in Korcha, Grazhdani in Gjegan, Poljana in Pulaj, Belgrad in Beogradi...

Paradoxically, but within the frames of the independent Republic of Macedonia, in the *Law for Territorial Organization* of the Republic of Macedonia's local self-management (published on 16th of August, 2004, in "Official Gazette" no. 55), which was bilingual – in Macedonian and in Albanian – a (non-systematic) translation was made of the Macedonian geographic names and settlements into Albanian. With this translation, the international standards

construct new toponym for a region which in the past did not bore the name it has today and that implicates orientation towards territories which today are inhabited mostly by Albanian population.

²⁵ With the newest practices in the Republic of Macedonia, the decrees stated in the *Law for management of world's natural and cultural heritage*, "Official Gazette" 07.06.2010, no. 75 in the region of Ohrid are disregarded.

²⁶ D. Burkhart, *Kulturraum Balkan. Studien zur Volkskunde und Literatur Südosteuropas*, Berlin/Hamburg 1989.

for toponyms as immovable cultural heritage have been endangered, which resulted with a process of violent de-Macedonization (or Albanization) of the Macedonian territory, history, identity and reality²⁷. With this legal act, hundreds of toponyms have been translated, from Macedonian to Albanian, but in this case a parallel existence of names was allowed – of the ancient Macedonian and the newly-constructed Albanian toponyms: Bela Voda – Uje i Bardhe, Rid – Kodra, Izvor – Kroj, Pole – Fushe, Crkva – Kishe, Montenegro – Mali i Zi, Bel Kamen – Gjuri Bard, Golema Mlaka – Mulaki Made, Golo Brdo – Kodra Goloce, Orlov Kamen – Gjuri Sipas, Studen Izvor – Kroj Ftohat, Crveno Brdo – Kodra Kuce, Suv Dol – Proj Tad, etc.

It should be noted that within the frames of the Yugoslavian Federation, toponyms managed to maintain their authentic and personal form from which they arose, so they were not subjected to semantic or other forms of confusions in the transcription process (from one language to another), and from one alphabet to another. This practice was far more civilized than the modern one, in which the leading interest in the interpretation of the inherited linguistic and other forms of spiritual, movable goods was of state interest, and most of the countries which surrounded Macedonia were national and with a low sensibility of language and cultural diversities²⁸. The basic motive to change the inherited names of the geographic places and villages and towns was the existence of non Greek ethnicities. The dislocation of the toponyms is followed by the dislocation of the linguistic/ethnic community, or its compensation.

Conclusion

The violent cultural and ethnic dislocation is a form of pathological and conflicting social situation. It is applicable in certain situations as a form of punishment, as political manipulation, as well as a strategy for de-identification, for a historical revision, for re-mapping of state borders and for obstruction of one nation, in order to force it to become an international legal subject. If it is correct that toponyms are facts of memory, then re-naming them becomes a violent revision of the facts of memory. One of the most obvious consequences

²⁷ With the newest practices in the Republic of Macedonia, the specifications included in the *Law for managing world's natural and cultural heritage* (published in Macedonia's "Official Gazette", no. 75 on 07.06.2010) have been disregarded.

²⁸ On the other hand, the case with Thessallia in Greece shows that the Slavic (non Greek) toponyms are still in use (they are not changed) because there was not a significant Macedonian (Slavophonic) population there.

of this cultural and linguistic violence lies in the negation of the cultural and historical pretext of one ethno-cultural identity.

The toponym translation is a form of a violent dislocation, a luxation of the linguistic and memory heritage, as well as of the collective memory of nations. Therefore, the cause of linguistic and cultural genocide, alien to civilization's humanistic code, including the code of democracy as well, lies in the translation process of toponyms; that process and should be prevented – and – adjusted/corrected whenever the conditions prove suitable. Violent translation of toponyms has geo-political consequences and that is why it has to be subjected to an international and regional scientific observation. On this distinguished comparative gathering, however rhetoric this might seem, we should accentuate the significance of future comparative researches into the field of linguistic and cultural memory of the Mediterranean, the Balkan, in Europe and worldwide. We should, of course, focus on developing new protective measurements of international, as well as regional character (considering the singularity of certain regions), which will focus on the protection of immovable cultural heritage and, in that context, of protection of linguistic heritage in the form of toponyms, as well as other forms of nomenclature of places.

The situation with toponyms in the Republic of Macedonia is so alarming, that it is absolutely necessary to take firm steps towards the correction of the aforementioned Law of 2004 and the other subordinate legislations in this context. History is subjected to revisions and reconstructions in situations when there are national, negative and secessionist intentions. To prevent a cultural catastrophe in the region of Macedonia, as well as on the Balkan region, a Balkan Charter should be adopted – as soon as possible – one which will protect toponyms and which will prevent the dislocation of geographic names from one language to another, from one collective memory to another and prevent dislocation of the historical truth itself, as well as inherited historical facts²⁹.

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Edited by Matthew McDonald*

²⁹ Exonims are forms of toponyms located outside of their own linguistic territory (outside of Macedonia); they were a subject of discussion on UN's conference held in Berlin in 2002.

Wymuszona konwersja językowa: tłumaczenie macedońskich toponimów w XX wieku

Streszczenie

W artykule podjęto zagadnienia związane z wymuszoną konwersją toponimów macedońskich, co może być traktowane jako forma językowego i kulturowego przemieszczenia / zwichnięcia / *luxatio* (łac. *luxatio, luxare, luxus* – zwichnięcie). Toponimy są nie tylko szczególnymi znakami językowymi, świadczą też o cywilizacyjnej pamięci narodów i całej ludzkości, stanowią przy tym odbicie faktów i dziedzictwa kulturowego, chronionego mocą międzynarodowych regulacji prawnych. Przekład toponimów z jednego języka na inny w ramach jednej przestrzeni kulturowej i etnicznej oznacza niewątpliwie przemoc wobec tego dziedzictwa. Zamiana toponimu i jego wymuszone tłumaczenie na inny język na mocy ustanawianych w tym celu aktów prawnych staje się przestępstwem (zbrodnią) wobec kultury. Toponim jest bowiem rzeczywistym odbiciem faktów i wspomnień historycznych. Toponimy można przepisywać innym alfabetem, litera po literze (łac. *transliteratio*), ale nie można ich przekładać, zwłaszcza na terytorium, na którym były ustanowione, stosowane i dziedziczone. Wymuszona zamiana prowadzi faktycznie do przekształcenia narracji historycznych i tożsamości etniczno-kulturowej. Historia dowodzi, że istnieją pewne formy przemocy prowadzące do dyslokacji językowej, religijnej i etnicznej. Radykalna rewizja macedońskich toponimów zidentyfikowanych jako słowiańskie jest prawdopodobnie jednym z nielicznych przykładów, jakie zna współczesna historia. Tak dzieje się od prawie stu lat – od początku 1920 roku aż do pierwszej dekady XXI stulecia. Toponimy, które pojawiły się na etnicznym terytorium Macedonii (na co istnieją niezaprzeczalne dowody), zostały przemieszczone z ich pierwotnego kontekstu językowego / kulturowego w ramach kilku podmiotów regulujących: greckiego, albańskiego i – jak się paradoksalnie wydaje – macedońskiego. Ten rodzaj zakłóceń językowych ma swoje geopolityczne konsekwencje.

Wprowadzone zmiany toponimów świadczą o systematycznej negacji macedońskiej tożsamości językowej i kulturowej, a w konsekwencji o procesie negowania prawa narodu macedońskiego do własnego państwa narodowego, gdyż główną intencją każdej negacji jest reinterpretacja, przetwarzanie i zmiana rzeczywistości historycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: toponimia macedońska, toponimy słowiańskie, język macedoński, tożsamość etniczno-kulturowa.

Key words: Macedonian toponyms, Slavic toponyms, Macedonian language, ethno-cultural identity.