

THE XENOLOGY OF THE POWDER KEG OF EUROPE: THE REFLECTION OF THE PECULIARITIES OF THE FRIEND OR FOE DICHOTOMY IN THE BALKAN MODEL OF THE WORLD IN THE XENOPEJORATIVE VOCABULARY OF THE LANGUAGES OF THE BALKAN SPRACHBUND. ARTICULATION OF ISSUE¹

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Abstract. This article discusses the reflection of the features of the “friend or foe” dichotomy in the Balkan model of the world in the xenologic pejorative vocabulary of the Balkan sprachbund languages: Albanian, Aromanian, Bulgarian, Modern Greek, Macedonian, Romanian and Serbo-Croatian. The author gives a brief review of the historical, cultural and geopolitical specifics of the Balkan-Carpathian region, which influenced the local peoples’ ideas about strangers; some traditional mythological beliefs of the Balkan peoples related to the conceptual field of otherness are also presented. Based on the analysis of the internal history of the word, an attempt is made to define the main models for constructing derogatory names for strangers in order to compare the data for various Balkan languages and, to the extent possible, build an integral image of the concept of alien in the Balkan conceptual worldview. According to the results of the study, the xenopejorative vocabulary of languages of the Balkan sprachbund shows significant similarities both in terms of form and content. Pejoratives with undifferentiated evaluativity predominate, which could account for the richness of the Balkan derivational morphology and a large number of lexical borrowings in each of the languages; pejoratives with an indication of appearance, features of language and peculiarities of behaviour are also widely represented; however, the first are referentially limited, while the second and the third are universal, from which it is concluded that the prototypical Balkan alien is someone who speaks differently and behaves different-

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ly. At the same time, the most common target for pejorative vocabulary in the Balkan languages among all strangers is the Romani people, which is due both to a number of stereotypical ideas about the physical and behavioural features of this ethnic group, and to the historical isolation caused by the nomadic way of life and the closedness of the Romani community from outsiders.

Keywords: own, alien, the Balkans, Balkan sprachbund, xenologic pejorative, xenophobia

The “friend or foe” dichotomy is one of the fundamental oppositions in the worldview of cultural communities. The study of this opposition from the point of view of linguoculturology is of interest no matter which cultural group is being studied; however, some communities, due to their historical, geographical and ethno-cultural specificity, appear more promising in terms of the conclusions we may be able to draw. One such community is, without a doubt, the peoples inhabiting the Balkan Peninsula.

The Balkan-Carpathian area is one of the most culturally interesting regions of Europe, as well as one of the most problematic from the political point of view. Numerous Russian and foreign researchers have examined Balkan cultures from various perspectives, including the “friend or foe” dichotomy. Among the most noteworthy are the works of A. V. Desnitskaya, T. V. Tsivyan, A. N. Soboleva, N. G. Golant, M. Todorova, T. Stoyanovich. It is clear that, due to the cultural and historical specifics of the region, the image of “foe” in the Balkans will also be rather specific.

The subject of this paper is the pejorative vocabulary of the conceptual field of “foe” in the languages of the Balkan sprachbund. The main criterion for classifying a culture as Balkan in this paper is not its geographic location (Romania, for example, is located entirely outside of the Balkan Peninsula itself, if the Danube is seen as its northern border), but rather a linguistic characteristic – the belonging to the Balkan sprachbund. The most compelling argument for the validity of this approach is the fact that the object of study in our case is exclusively linguistic material – pejorative lexemes of the Balkan languages that are in one way or another related to the “friend or foe” dichotomy (and the patterns identified as a result of this study can be considered both cultural and linguistic – lexical and lexical-semantic Balkanisms). Istriot and Meglenitic have deliberately been excluded from this work, as they have been insufficiently studied by linguists, and because the number of speakers of these languages is extremely low.² Thus, in this article, we compare the xenologic pejoratives of seven languages: Albanian, Aromanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Modern Greek, Romanian, and Serbo-Croatian.³ This study aims to identify the general patterns of the “friend or

² In the Romanian linguistic tradition, these are called Istro-Romanian and Megleno-Romanian and are considered dialects of Romanian.

³ For more on the Balkan sprachbund (Lindstedt 2000, Friedman 2008).

foe” opposition in the Balkan languages. The working hypothesis is the assumption that the ideas about the “foe” or the “other” in the cultural consciousness are materially represented in the expressive nomination of strangers (“others”), and therefore, based on the data on vocabulary of this kind, we can attempt to build a model of the image of the “Balkan stranger.” The purpose of this paper is to conduct a comparative analysis of xenologic pejoratives (in this article, the term xenologic pejorative, or xeno-pejorative, means a pejorative lexeme that directly names someone or something as “other” or “alien,” or is related to the conceptual field of “foreignness” or “alienness”) in the languages of the Balkan sprachbund, and to further derive the general and specific features from this of the image of the “stranger” in the ethno-cultural picture of the world of the Balkan peoples.

The contribution of this paper to the field of study is the fact that it is the first (that we know of) comparative study of Balkan xenology based on xeno-pejorative vocabulary. From the theoretical point of view, this paper will be of interest to a wide range of scholars – ethnographers, ethnologists, culturologists, anthropologists, and linguists, not to mention, of course, experts in Balkan studies, as well as other researchers whose interests include the “friend or foe” or “us versus them” dichotomy. From a practical point of view, this study promises to contribute to a deeper understanding of the ethno-cultural and ethno-confessional conflicts in the Balkan-Carpathian area, as well as to the search for ways to resolve them.

The Historical, Cultural and Geopolitical Features of the Balkan-Carpathian Area

The Balkan Peninsula, which for many centuries was located at the junction of the borders of the great empires of the past, has a complex and contradictory history. It is no coincidence that the region has received the moniker of the “powder keg of Europe”: for hundreds of years, the peoples of the Balkans were under the rule of the Sublime Porte; throughout the twentieth century, the region was shaken (and continues to be shaken today, in the twenty-first century) by various ethnic, religious and other conflicts, the most troubling of which today are the so-called “Macedonian question,” the issue of Albanian nationalism, and the confrontation between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo (Lamash 2021). In addition to disputes over various territories (for example, Kosovo or Transylvania), there are also conflicts regarding issues of identity. For example, the Bulgarian government refuses to acknowledge the existence of Macedonians as a separate ethnic group, and Macedonian as a separate language (Kirchanov 2021); for years, the Greek government officially denied Macedonia’s right to the name “Macedonia,” which resulted in it being officially changed to North Macedonia (Parastatov 2010; Koloskov 2011); nationalist Serbs do not recognize the existence of Croats and Bosnians, considering them Catholic and Muslim Serbs, respectively, while, interestingly, Croatian supremacists hold the same view regarding an independent Serbian nation and identity (Belyakov 2010). The frequent political upheavals have led to the

term “Balkanization” becoming a household word in international political discourse, in the sense of the fragmentation of a once monolithic territory into separate independent entities. The sheer number of unresolved issues and the constant ethnopolitical tension would suggest, at least in theory, that the people of the region need a psychological defence, a safety valve to protect their mental health, or at the very least a way to vocalize their resentments in the most basic way. In thus follows that there should be an abundance of xenopejorative terms in the languages of the Balkans that can be used as a basis to construct a model of the “other.”

This condition is a consequence of the specifics of the Balkan Peninsula, ranging from natural factors to the historical vicissitudes of the region. The peninsula, both geographically and culturally, is at the point where Europe and Asia converge, hence the common name of the territories to the east and west of the Bosphorus – Eurasia Minor. On the other hand, the ruggedness of the landscape is conducive to isolation, which has led to great cultural and linguistic fragmentation in the region (Sobolev 2013: 75). As A. Sobolev notes, “a feature of the geographical borders of the Balkans is that they are easy for humans to climb and cross.” The border there does not divide, but rather connects. Accordingly, the region is relatively accessible in terms of trade and cultural contacts.

As for the regional specifics of the “friend or foe” dichotomy, researchers typically point to “the characteristic openness of the Balkans to all things foreign, the ease of crossing the territory, and its inherent amenability, as it were, to language contacts, to communication in difficult conditions...” (Tsivyan 1999: 99) which emerged as a result of a variegated cultural and linguistic palette. In addition, according to T. Tsivyan, the concept of “friend or foe” in the Balkans is, to a certain extent, “included in the circle of spatiotemporal oppositions (Tsivyan 1999: 1), and the Balkan space itself is characterized by a “system of unstable opposites [...] from rigid binarism to its categorical denial.” For the land there is not completely dry – surrounded as it is by water on three sides – nor is the sea a sea in the truest sense of the word, as it is dotted with numerous islands. It can be said that this natural geographic “interpenetration” of opposing elements is also reflected in the peninsula’s culture: linguistically (there would, of course, be no point talking about a sprachbund if such interpenetration did not exist), as well as in everyday life, local customs, and even religion – for example, Albanian Muslim women carve the image of a cross onto bread dough, Christian icons are brought as offerings to the graves of Islamic dervish saints, and one monastery in Macedonia has a room specially designated for Muslims (Sobolev 2013: 135). All these properties, which highlight the fragility of the boundary between “us” and “them,” between “friend” and “foe” in the conditions of constant cultural exchange, must have left their mark on the model of the Balkan stranger.

At the same time, the image of the stranger, of a foreign land and a foreign language, occupy an important place in the folklore and the mythological picture of the world of the Balkan peoples, manifesting themselves in legends, fables and superstitions. Tsivyan, for example, points to Romanian beliefs associated with foreign peo-

ples: “*Armenian* [all italics used in quotations have been added by the author for emphasis] is used as a name for cursed people. In their land, cattle, and even people, are slaughtered and thrown into the abyss to the dragon. And the dragons give them precious stones in return [...] Written *in Russian* on the wings of the locust are its age and the number of years it will eat the crops” (Tsivyan 2006: 119). According to the beliefs of the people of the Oltenia province in Romania (which have parallels with the beliefs of Bulgarians and Serbs), the *Jews* (*jidovi*) – who were incredibly tall and strong – inhabited the Earth before the flood (Golant 2013). Widespread among the Romanian and Montenegrin people are aetiological legends about where the various food prohibitions of the Jews, Turks, and sometimes even Hungarians, came from: as the story goes, the Jews (Turks, Hungarians) do not eat pork because one their tribesmen was once turned into a pig, and they do not want to risk eating their relative (Golant 2012). People of “other” ethnicities are seen as part of a group of demonic creatures (typically three) who foretell the fate of children when they are born: for the Romanians, this creature is usually a *Hungarian*, a *Jew* or a *Gypsy* (although a Romanian may be included too) (Golant 2016); the Bulgarians of South Bulgaria and Dobrudzha believe that the demons into which the souls of dead mothers and pregnant women turn are called *armenki*, *armentsi*, *ermenki*, or *ermenliyki* (Plotnikova 2009), and the souls of unbaptized babies are called *evreiche* (*Jewish*), *pomache*, or *tsiganche* (*Gypsy*) (Trefilova 2020: 175). The opposition of “a person of my faith” versus “a person of another faith” is clearly and directly associated with the dichotomy “human versus inhuman.” Thus, in the Balkan folk consciousness, the line that “outsiders” are from the non-human realm can clearly be traced. First, “outsiders” are associated with the animal world (and typically to animals that cause harm, such as insects – destroyers of crops; it is also worth noting that the Romanian tradition names the locust specifically, a reference to the idea of heterotopia, as swarms of locusts typically come from the “outside”). Second, they are associated with the chthonic world and the monsters that inhabit it (and here would be a good place to mention the belief of some experts that the core concept of “other” is precisely the image of the monster (Foucault 2005; Romanova 2015). And third, they are associated with the spirit world and devilry, and the “outsider” is sometimes even endowed with supernatural abilities. It would thus make sense that these facts should also determine the specific features of Balkan xenology.

Research Methodology

The material used in this study was taken from explanatory and etymological dictionaries (both hardcopy and online), as well as, in the case of Serbo-Croat and Bulgarian, through interviews with native speakers. This likely explains the small number of lexemes found (125 in total): lexicographers are reluctant to use expressive vocabulary with an invective charge in dictionaries, and speakers may be ashamed or embarrassed to admit that they use such language, or want to present their native tongue in the most favourable light possible. The same reasoning can be used to explain the dispro-

portionality of data across languages: for example, only ten xenologic pejorative units were identified in Modern Greek, a very small sample compared to the 48 units found in Romanian.⁴

Having isolated the xenologic pejorative vocabulary from the lexicon of these languages, we analysed the meanings embedded in it based on the theory of internal form expounded by Alexander Potebnja – namely, that the structure of the word indicates the thought process of the person who uttered it, and therefore preserves the memory of the worldview of the ancestors of native speakers today (Potebnja 1989).

The next step in our methodology was to divide the xenopejoratives into semantic groups in terms of their internal form. The Russian linguist S. Yakushenkov proposed a three-part model of the image of the “stranger,” which was then developed in detail by O. Yakushenkova. According to the model, the three most important components, or facets, of the stranger’s reflection (the three markers of their “otherness” or “alienness”) in one’s picture of the world are: alimentary (their food habits); vestimentarity (how they dress), and sexuality (their sex life and marital behaviour).⁵ This model appears to be structurally incomplete: it is easy to see that the parameters listed by Yakushenkova can be described using a single word – behaviour – while it is clear, even from her work itself, that physicality and linguistic characteristics are no less important in the creation of the image of the stranger.

For this reason, we decided to supplement and expand upon this three-part model and, based on the marker that is the basis for motivating the xenopejorative, divide the material into the following models:

- corporeal (with the sub-models “appearance” and “dehumanization”);
- linguistic (with the sub-models “phonetics,” “lexicon” and “onomastics”);
- behavioural (with the sub-models “alimentary,” “vestimentarity,” “sexuality,” and “other,” which includes all other behavioural characteristics not related to sexuality, and so on).

At the practical stage of our research, however, it became clear that these models are insufficient for a full analysis. The following models were thus added:

- heterotopic (associated with the idea that the stranger belongs to another space, discussed in detail by V. G. Lysenko (Lysenko 2009);
- historical precedent (related to precedent phenomena of various kinds, in particular to the historical experience of interaction with representatives of a group of “others”);
- undifferentiated (the motivating marker cannot be identified due to the obscurity of the internal form, or its undifferentiated negative evaluation, expressed grammatically – most often with an expressive suffix).

⁴ It is worth noting here that my level of knowledge of these languages varies, and with respect to Albanian and Greek in particular, I had to rely on translations and my own linguistic intuition when assessing their accuracy.

⁵ Yakushenkova O. S. 2014. *The Image of the Stranger in Heterotopic Spaces of the Frontier*. Doctoral dissertation. Astrakhan.

We are also forced to draw the reader's attention to the fact that, for the purposes of the study, we deliberately ignored the specific expressive content of each xenopejorative – ironic, derogatory and directly offensive lexemes with negative connotations were used indiscriminately for analysis. If we had not, we would have had to conduct a discourse analysis in order to clarify our results – that is, we would have had to have studied each example in context – which would increase the size of the work several times over, without significantly affecting the results obtained.

Findings

Now that we have got the methodology clear, let us move directly to our findings and see which models are represented in each of the Balkan languages, and to what extent.

The largest number of xenopejoratives (48 units) was obtained for the Romanian language (which can be explained by the fact that more relevant material is available in Romanian-language publications, and that the topic receives greater attention). Of these xenopejoratives, the corporeal model contains such units as *balaoacheș* (a combination of *balai* ["fair-haired"] + *oacheș* ["dark-haired"], most likely ironic in meaning) – "gypsy"; *ciorânglav* – "gypsy" (from the Slavic *cernoglav* ["black head"], although it could have emerged independently on Romanian soil from *cioară* ["crow"] + *glavă* ["head"], the latter being borrowed previously from one of the South Slavic languages⁶); *încărbunat* ("charred") – "gypsy" (from the Russian for "coal, smoked" – meaning "a black person" in this context) – gypsy; and the less obvious *bahniță* ("dirty person"), likely from *bahnă* ("swamp, marshy mud") – gypsy, and *gașper* ("Casper," one of the wise men who came to worship the baby Jesus and was, according to legend, distinguished by his dark skin⁷), which, again, means "gypsy." Three pejoratives of this group that are not associated with gypsies are *șonț*, meaning "German" ("lame," cf. Hung. *sánta, sántika* – "lame";⁸ Serb./Croat., Bulg. *шантав* [*shantav*] – "lame, paralyzed," although it is possible that they originated independently from the same source, or are not related to each other whatsoever); *parhă* – "scab" (with the variants *parhal, parhal, harhal* and *harhar*) to refer to Hebrews; and *ciutac* ("stump") to refer to Turks (this xenopejorative evidently refers to the custom of circumcision, and should therefore be classified as behavioural).

A subset of the corporeal model is "dehumanization," which includes *balaur* ("snake") in reference to gypsies (apparently motivated by the phonetic similarity to *balaoacheș*); *cioară* ("crow") – "gypsy," sometimes a "black person"; *cioroi* ("crow," "large crow," "male crow" – but not a raven [Rom. *Corb*])⁹ – "gypsy"; *coțofană* ("mag-

⁶ Șăineanu L. 1929. Dicționar universal al limbei române, ediția a VI-a.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The suffix -oi combines augmentative and masculine forms (it is used to form the names of male animals: *pisoi* – "tomcat"; *broscoi* – "male frog"; *lebedoi* – "cob") and have a pejorative meaning.

pie”) – a female gypsy (the motivating marker here is more behavioural, although de-humanizing does take place); *gărvan* (< Bulg. *garvan* [“raven”]) – “gypsy” (cf. *cioară, cioroi*); *graur* (“starling”) – “gypsy” (*cioroi* + *arapină* [“negro”] + the magnifying suffix *-ină*, according to the etymology proposed by A. Scriban¹⁰) – “gypsy.” As we can see, the references are mainly to various birds with dark plumage, and primarily from the Corvidae family, based on the supposed similarity of the appearance and behaviour of gypsies to these animals.

The linguistic model is represented by xenopejoratives indicating stereotypical names: *honț* (from *Hans*) – “Transylvanian Saxon”; *iuhman* – “Jew,” this evidently reproduces the stereotypical sound of Ashkenazi surnames (*-man*);¹¹ the use of the autoethnonym as a negatively coloured nomination: *poleac* – “Pole” (neutral – *poleac* or the obsolete *leah*); the focus on the sound features of the accent: *maldafan* – “Moldovan (person)” (Moldovans are considered “Russified Romanians,” hence the exaggerated reflection of the Russian accent, with the unstressed /o/ being replaced by /a/; the neutral ethnonym is written *moldovean*); imitation of the sound of the language through characteristic phrases: *danci* – “gypsy child” (< *Romani dan ci* – “give me something”); *parpalec* (most likely “person who stutters”: the internal form is obscured here, although Scriban suggests that it could be mocking the tongue-tied pronunciation of foreigners¹²) – “Greek person,” specifically a travelling merchant (cf. Russ. *офеня* [*ofenya*], which, according to one version, is derived from the name of the city of Athens). This possibly also includes *bozgor* – “Hungarian,” if the etymology from *boscorodi* (“to grumble, to mumble”) is correct (the Hungarian language is incomprehensible to Romanian speakers), or the version suggested by Hungarian historian S. Szilágyi that the word is a composite of the Hungarian swear word *baszd meg* (lit. “take [fuck] me”) and the Romanian neutral ethnonym denoting a Hungarian person (*ungur*), as well as numerous units with obscure etymologies: *ștronț* – “German, Hungarian”; *șoangher, șoanghină, boanghen* (unless this is a Slavism from *жзринъ* or *вазринъ* [both of which mean “Hungarian”) – “Hungarian.” All of these can be imitations of the sound of an incomprehensible language.

Behavioural xenopejoratives include alimentary: *broscar* (“frog eater”), *macaronar* (“pasta maker”) – “Italian”; *orezar* (“rice grower,” “rice eater”) – “Asian,” most often Chinese; *pilafgiu* (“fruit grower”) – “Turk” (these last two xenopejoratives combine alimentary and activity models). The only xenopejorative that can be unambiguously classified as vestimentarity is *șalvaragiu* (“baggy trousers”) – “Turk”; other words that can be placed in this category include, once again, *bozgor*, assuming that the most plausible version – that it comes from the dialect pronunciation of the Hung. *bocskor*,

¹⁰ Scriban A. 1939. Dicționarul limbii românești. Presa Bună.

¹¹ Scriban offers a version of the origin of this word from the German expletives *Jauchemann* – “gold digger”(?), although the connection to Jews is not immediately obvious here. Also, for this particular xenopejorative, it should be noted that the meaning “devil, vampire” probably appeared secondhand.

¹² Scriban.

which means a certain type of shoes without soles worn by Balkan shepherds (Brubaker 2006) – is correct, and another ethnonym we have already mentioned, *coțofană* – “gypsies,” an exaggerated take on the love of gypsies (much like magpies) for shiny jewellery, and their poor taste in general. Other features of behaviour and character are indicated again by the word *coțofană* (like magpies, gypsies are known to have a penchant for stealing things) and, possibly, *cioropină*, which, we assume, may be a distorted version of *cere-pâine* – “to ask for bread” (cf. *danci*, as well as the semantically and structurally similar version in the section of the Aromanian language). *Ciutac* mentioned above refers to customs and traditions.

Almost no purely heterotopic examples in Romanian were identified. The only one we could find was combined with a precedent, in the xenopejorative *faraon* – “gypsies” (which refers both to the common belief that the gypsies originated from Egypt, and to the episode in the Bible where the Egyptian soldiers drowned in the Red Sea in pursuit of the Jews – the suggestion here is that the gypsies are related to or descendants of the soldiers who died). Another, extremely tentative exception here could be the abovementioned ethno-pejorative *bozgor*, which many non-experts believe to be a translation from the Hungarian, meaning “a man without a homeland,” or “a man without a country.”¹³ Despite its clearly mythical nature (“a man without a homeland” in Hungarian is *hazátlan ember*, and “a man without a country” is *hontalan ember*), this version nevertheless warrants mention, since the idea is itself an important part of the picture of the world of those who actually use the word. It is worth noting that this mythology refers to the long-standing dispute between the Romanian and Hungarian historical and mythological narratives about which of the two peoples first settled in Transylvania, and thus who has the historical right to its ownership, in particular to the fact that the Hungarian people are supposedly nomads who originally came from the wild Asian steppes and thus do not have a native land (Luchkanin 2014). Another unscientific version claims that *bozgor* comes from the Turkish *bozkır* – “steppe.” Thus, both of these folk etymologies, although they have nothing to do with the actual origin of the word, nevertheless reflect the ideas that exist in the Romanian conceptual picture of the world that the Magyars (Hungarians) are aliens, “outsiders,” from somewhere in the endless plains of Central Asia.

Finally, many xenopejorative units in Romanian cannot be analysed synchronously, as they are borrowed from various third languages, for example, *pem* – “Czech,” borrowed from the German *Böhm* (Borisov, Pilipenko 2020); *șoacă* – “German” or “Hungarian,” is taken from the Serbo-Croat *uokau* (*shokats*, see below); *liftă* – “Catholic,” most likely a distortion of *Litva* (“Lithuania”); *hahol* – “Ukrainian person” (< Russ. *хохол*, *khokhol*), *cifut*, *jidov*, *jidan*, and *târtan* are all various pejorative designations for Jews, borrowed from Turkish, Old Church Slavonic, and German, respectively (*târtan* has an interesting etymological history itself, as it comes from the German

¹³ Dicționar explicativ al limbii române. URL: <https://dexonline.ro>

Untertan, meaning “subject”:¹⁴ originally, the word was evidently a euphemism for the Jews – subjects of the Austrian monarchy, to which Transylvania historically belonged, although it does not convey anything about the image of the stranger), or do not carry significant information for research, since the derogatory meaning is expressed in them undifferentiated, using a diminutive, augmentative, or simply general pejorative suffix (*bulgăroi* – “Bulgarian”; *grecoței*, *grecoșor* – “Greek”; *negrotei* – “negro, dark-skinned”; *nemțălău* – “German”; *rusnac* – “Russian”; *papistaș* – “Catholic”).

A total of 19 pejorative lexemes related to the field of “other” or “alien” were identified in the Bulgarian language.¹⁵ There were no xenopejoratives relating to appearance, nor did we observe examples of dehumanization. The only word we can, somewhat tentatively, place in this category is *mangal* – “gypsy,” along with its variants *mango* and *mangasar*. Most likely, this lexeme refers to the linguistic model, but native speakers associate this derogatory nickname with the word *mangal* in the meaning of a roaster or grill – after all, grills are smoky, and the stereotypical image of a gypsy implies blackness and dirt (cf. Rom. *încărbunat*).

The linguistic model includes *doichovets* – “German” (from the self-designation Deutsch), and also, potentially, *muzhik* – “Russian,” a borrowing from the Russian language.

The alimentary model clearly includes *zhabar* (“frog eater”) – Italian, and *mami-ligar* (“mămăligă eater”) – Romanian; while *fes* (“fez”) and *piskul* (“tassel”), meaning Turk, belong in the vestimentarity model (as they are characteristic elements of the traditional Turkish national attire). The sexuality model includes political pejoratives, of which there is just one example: *gerebrast*, the name used to refer to a member or supporter of the nationalist party GERB + *pederast* (“faggot, queer”). Behavioural xenopejoratives that refer to religious customs include *ryazan* (“circumcised”), *ryazan pishchov* (“sawn-off shotgun”) – “Turk”; *katunar* (“taborshchik”) – “gypsy,” referring to a nomadic lifestyle; *apash* (in the sense of “swindler”), which also refers to gypsies (Lesnichkova 2020), points to the stereotype that gypsies often steal.

The historical precedent model is based on ethnonyms and demonyms, which at some point in the past were completely neutral, but over time acquired a negative connotation: *vizantinets* (“Byzantine”) and *fanariot* (“Phanariot”) – “Greek” (these two xenopejoratives imply hypocrisy and deceit,¹⁶ although this does not follow from their internal form); *arnautin* means “Albanian” and *prusak* is used for “German.”

Undifferentiated xenopejoratives include the borrowings: *chifut/chifutin* – “Jew” (< Turk. *çifut*), *rash'n* (“Russian”) and *gypsy* (“gypsy”) (< Eng. Russian and Gypsy). At a stretch, these could be included in the linguistic model, but even if they can, then it is only in a very indirect manner, through the foreign sound of the lexeme itself.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Речник на българския език. URL: <https://ibl.bas.bg/rbe/lang/bg>

¹⁶ Ibid.

Twenty-one xenopejoratives were identified in the Serbo-Croatian language (which we did not divide into Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian and Montenegrin, since the set of pejorative vocabulary is the same), a considerable part of which is related to the religious conflicts on the peninsula.

The dehumanization sub-model of the corporeal model is represented by the xenopejorative *tovar* (“donkey”), used to refer to people from Dalmatia in Croatia, apparently with the connotation “draft cattle” (see *shkutur* below).

The linguistic model can be observed in the xenopejorative *shiptar* – “Albanian,” derived from the autoethnonym *shqiptar*; evidently, the lexeme *balija*, used to refer to Turks and Yugoslav Muslims (Bosniaks), and apparently originating from an Ottoman forename (Turk. *Bāli*), which, in turn, comes from the Arabic (*bālī*, “worn out, dilapidated”).¹⁷ Incidentally, the ethnonym *Boshnyak* is itself considered pejorative by some speakers, erroneously associated with the Turkish word *boş* – “nothing, a nonentity.”

Xenopejoratives that belong in the alimentary model are represented, again, by *zhabar* and also refer to “Italians.” Xenopejoratives of the sexuality model include the lexeme *kozojeb* (“goat fucker”), used to refer to Albanians, Bosnians, and apparently Muslims in general. The general behavioural model (in this case, xenopejoratives relating to activity) includes *konjushar* (“groom”) to refer to Croats or Slovenians (possibly with the implication of “servant,” as Slovenians and Croats are seen as having betrayed Orthodoxy and freedom by entering into the service of the Catholic Hapsburgs, those who, according to the Serbian proverb, traded their faith for a meal), *shkutor/shkutur* (a distorted form of the word *egzekutor* – “performer/executor [of some dirty work], an Austrian servant, a sycophant”),¹⁸ *dalmatinetz* (“Dalmatian”) and *chergar/chergash* – “tent dweller,” i.e. someone without a permanent shelter, a wanderer or vagabond; in other words, a gypsy.

Historical grievances of all kinds play an important role among the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, which makes the historical precedent model particularly important: Serbs, for example, refer to the Croats as *ustasha* (a reference to the far-right Croatian fascist organization Ustasha that was active between 1929 and 1945), while Croats and Bosnians call Serbs *chetnitsy* (“Chetniks,” a reference to the Chetnik Detachments of the Yugoslav Army, nationalist-monarchist Serbian militias that operated in the first half of the 20th century). Other xenopejorative units that arguably belong to the historical precedent model include *shvaba* (“Swabian,” used to refer to Germans and Austrians); *shokatz* (from the German dialect pronunciation of the ethnonym *Sachse* – “Saxon”) – “German,” and also “Catholic”; *vlakh* (meaning “foreigner, non-religious,” a word used by Catholic Croats to characterize Orthodox Christians), Bosnian Muslims, and all Christians in general).

¹⁷ Wiktionary. The free multilingual dictionary. URL: <https://wiktionary.org>

¹⁸ Српски дијалектолошки зборњик. Књига LXII. 2015. Расправе и грађа. Српска академија наука и уметности и институт за српски језик САНУ.

Finally, the undifferentiated group of xenopejoratives includes words formed from suffixes: *tsrnchuga* (from *tsrn* – “black,” meaning “negro”; while the xenopejorative does contain an indication of a bodily feature – skin colour, it is the suffix that should probably be considered the bearer of the evaluations, cf. *ljenchuga* – “lazybones”); and *srbenda* (a Serb in general, and a Serbian jingoist in particular).¹⁹ It also includes words borrowed from third languages: *bodul* – Dalmatian (< It. *bodolo*);²⁰ *gabel* – “gypsy” (< Alb. *Gabel*, see below); *čifutin/čivutin* – “Jew” (< Turk. *çifut*); and *kaur* – “infidel, non-Muslim,” cf. Rus. *гяур* (*gyuar*) (< Turk *gâvur*).²¹

Particularly worthy of note is the lexeme *poturica/poturcenik/poturchenjak*, which is used to refer to someone who has converted to Islam (and thus become a “Turk”). The word explicitly indicates the act of changing identity and, as such, it does not fit into any of the models we have established. However, a clearly negative attitude to that change is demonstrated in the word, and confessional identity is directly linked to ethnicity (we thus believe that this feature is extremely important for understanding the Serbian picture of the world).

The set of xenopejoratives is similar to the Bulgarian set, on the one hand, and the Serbo-Croatian, on the other, and contains a total of nine units. The same alimentary pattern is evident, represented by the lexeme *zhabar* (with the same referent, “Italian”). The linguistic model includes *shiptar* – “Albanian” (cf. Serb./Croat.) and its derivative *shipets*, as well as, most likely, *manga* (“gypsy,” cf. Bulgarian, which, depending on the etymology, can be classified as corporeal), and the ethnonym *tsintsar* (“Aromanian”), which is not always considered offensive and originates either from the Aromanian *tsintsi* (“five”) or from the general impression of the sound of the Aromanian languages, full of the combinations [tsi] and [tse] in positions where in other Balkan Romance languages it is usually pronounced [ʃi], [ʃe] or [ʃi] or [ʃe].²² The heterotopic model should probably include the xenopejorative *guptin* (“Egyptian,” i.e. “gypsy,” similar in origin to Eng. *gypsy* and Rom. *faraon*). The following suffix formations can be considered undifferentiated: *tsrnchuga*, which we saw in Serbo-Croatian and which carries the same meaning; and the political xenopejorative *komovar* – “communist”; as well as *jenki* (“American”), an obvious anglicism (from the word *Yankee*, which is also found in Russian).²³

Albanian (13 units) demonstrates xenopejoratives that fit into the corporeal model (*manga* – “gypsy”: cf. Bulg., Maced.), the alimentary model (*zhabar* – “Italian”; this has possibly been borrowed directly from one of the neighbouring Slavic languages,

¹⁹ It is appropriate to include this xenopejorative in the research material, as its referent belongs to the field of “alien, other, outsider,” both from the point of view of Croats and Bosnians (an ethnic xenopejorative), and from the point of view of Serbs who do not share jingoistic beliefs (a political and ideological xenopejorative).

²⁰ Hrvatski jezični portal. URL: <https://hjp.znanje.hr>

²¹ Речник српског језика. Измењено и поправљено издање. 2011. Матица Српска.

²² Capidan T. 1932. Aromânii. Dialectul aromân. Academia Română.

²³ Дигитален речник на македонскиот јазик. URL: <http://drmj.eu>

but the internal form is clearly felt by speakers due to the fact that the word *zhabe* exists in Albanian, and means “toad”), the general behavioural model (*cergar/cergatar* [“tent dweller,”], *strannik* – “gypsy”; *gabel* [“deceiver”] – “gypsy”²⁴), undifferentiated suffix formations (*grekoman* – “Greek”; *turkoshak* – “Greek”), and borrowings (*jenki* – “American”). Of the suffixal formations, however, the lexeme *shipuc* (literally “Albanian,” but in practice the word is used to denote an Albanaphobe, typically from among the Serbs or Macedonians) is also intriguing for the purposes of our study. This xenopejorative is a phonetically distorted version of the autoethnonym *shqip*, but the [c] (written q) is dropped, as in the South Slavic derogatory ethnonym *shiptar* (borrowed from the Albanian *shqiptar* and appearing in Serbo-Croatian as *uħunemap* [*shiptar*], although this form is now archaic; the form without the letter *h* is considered pejorative by Albanians themselves), with the diminutive suffix *-uc*. Another complex and ambiguous case is demonstrated by the xenopejorative *viç* (“calf”), used to refer to Serbians or Montenegrins. Based on the literal meaning of the internal form of the word, we should probably classify it as dehumanizing. However, *-viç* here serves as an allusion to the common ending of Serbian surnames – *vić* (Serb./Croat. *-viħ*), and to Slobodan Milošević in particular – that is, this pejorative also contains signs of the linguistic and historical precedent models. *Viç* is also used with the derogatory meaning “fool, a stupid person,” that originated entirely independently, and perhaps evokes corresponding associations, although in this case they should obviously not be taken into account due to their secondary nature. As a term for gypsies, the lexeme *arixhi* (“bear leader”) can be singled out, belonging to the category of general behavioural xenopejoratives. Other xenopejoratives that refer to gypsies in Albania include *katal*, *kurbat* (both of Turkish origin), and *magjup/maxhup*, whose internal forms are somewhat uncertain: we cannot say anything unequivocally about the first example, but the second, according to Maria Koinova, is probably related to the idea of emigration (Tur. *gurbet* – “foreign land”),²⁵ and, therefore, belongs in the heterotopic category. *Magjup/maxhup*, meanwhile, appears to be connected in some manner either with the Egyptian origin attributed to the gypsies, or with their supposed magical abilities, which means, in terms of classification, it belongs in either the heterotopic of behavioural category, although it would perhaps be more prudent to leave it in the undifferentiated column. To sum up, it is worth noting that the word *çifut*, which is familiar to us from other Balkan languages, is also present in Albanian, although it does not carry a negative connotation.²⁶ As such, it is beyond the scope of our study.

²⁴ Maria Koinova offers an alternative explanation: the word literally means “stranger, foreigner” and goes back to some unnamed “Mediterranean root,” likely via Latin. The version we offer in this paper is more transparent, but we nevertheless consider it necessary to present this one as well. Koinova M. 2000. Minorities in Southeast Europe. Roma of Albania. Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe - Southeast Europe (CEDIME-SE). URL: https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/46231/Koinova_RomaofAlbania.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 12.12.2023).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Fjalor i gjuhës shqipe (ASHSH 2006). URL: <https://fjalorthi.com/>

With the Aromanian language (11 units), the physical model is evident (*subtsāri* [“thin, slim”], *limbā-subtsāri* [“thin tongue”] – “Greek”; *groshi* [“fat”] – “Bulgarian”; *lāvoshi* [“dirty”] – “Serbs”), as is the alimentary model (*macaronari* [“macaroni eaters”] – “Italians”), and the general behavioural xenopejorative *purintsā* (“pagans”) – “Pomaks.” The word *zdaŋgaŋi*, meaning “Bulgarians” and/or “Macedonians,” does not have an entirely clear internal form (the translation of this in the Romanian source text is *mojic* [“men”] in the sense of “yokel”). Speakers of Aromanian use the nickname *gricumani* to refer to Greek people, much like Albanians do. The epithets “thin” in relation to Greeks and “thick” in relation to Bulgarians curiously echo the lines of Mihai Eminescu (a Romanian Romantic poet, one of the pantheon of “fathers of the nation” and among the country’s most mythologized historical and literary figures (Kirchanov 2016): “Și apoi în sfatul țării se adun să se admire // Bulgăroi cu ceafa groasă, grecotei cu nas subțire...”:²⁷ “In the Council then they gather and put on their shows / Dull Bulgarians with thick napes, and Greeks with their slender noses...” (this is a word-for-word translation, and this part is actually omitted from the translation into Russian by I. Mirimsky). It would seem that that the idea that Greek people have distinctive facial features, and Bulgarians are somewhat rotund is, if not a constant, then at least a stable stereotype among the Eastern Roman peoples. Pericle Papahagi offers several more ethnonyms used to refer to the Romani people.²⁸ While there is no *porecle* (“nickname”) for them, per se, the words used are undeniably xenopejoratives: *fusari* (“godwits”), *ursari* (“bear leader”), *tsirāpānj* (Papahagi spells the word in the Daco-Romanian style – *Țirāpîni*) – literally “sleeping,” i.e. “beggars”;²⁹ all these lexemes should be attributed to the general behavioural model.

Modern Greek (ten units) demonstrates examples of the general behavioural model in political xenopejoratives (*Κατσαπλιάς* [“thief, robber”] – an ELAS [Greek People’s Liberation Army] fighter³⁰), although the historical precedent model and undifferentiated models dominate. Historical precedents include the xenopejoratives *Αράπης* and its variant *αραπάκι*, complicated by the derogatory suffix *-arap* – “negro,” “arab” (Turk. *Arap*; note that, in addition to the real referent, this word also means a supernatural creature that is used to scare children),³¹ *Αγαρηνός* (“Hagarian”) – “Turk, Arab” (evidently, the word is used to refer to Muslims in general); *Φράγκος* (“frank”) – “Catholic,” and its derivative *Κουτόφραγκος* (“dumb frank”) – “Western European” (obviously primarily a tourist – cf. Span. *Guiri*). Xenopejoratives from the undifferentiated model include *Αμερικανάκι* – “American,” *Ελληναράς* – “Greek” (“Great Greek chauvinist”³²),

²⁷ Eminescu M. *Scrisoarea a III-a*. URL: https://www.mihaieminescu.eu/opere/poezii/scrisoarea_III.html#. YoPabIRBzIU (accessed 12.12.2023).

²⁸ Papahagi P. 1925. *Numiri etnice la Aromâni*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Wiktionary.

³¹ Dictionary of Standard Modern Greek. URL: https://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/search.html?lq=%CE%91%CF%81%CE%AC%CF%80%CE%B7%CF%82&dq=

³² The xenopejoratives *Κατσαπλιάς* and *Ελληναράς* are included here for the same reason that the xenopejorative *srbeŋd* was included earlier: the referent is an outsider in relation to speakers of Greek who do not share his political beliefs.

and Τουρκαλάς – “Turk.” Καράγυφτος – “gypsies” stands apart here, with the pejorative connotation being conveyed by a prefix of Turkish origin that carries the meaning “black,” although in Greek it has acquired a general evaluative meaning, for example *καραπουτάννα* – “prostitutes,” that is, this xenopejorative should be classified as undifferentiated. Αράπης noted above can be supplemented by its derivative Σκυλάραπας – “arab bitch” (*σκύλα* means “bitch”), which could be attributed to the dehumanization model, but this appears to be a de-semanticized generalized pejorative prefix similar to *καρα-*. Looking at Greek pejoratives, the term Σκοπιανός – “Skopjan (a resident of Skopje),” (Koloskov 2011) which appears neutral at first glance, stands out, as it does not fall under any of the models and is used as a derogatory name for Macedonians, thereby emphasizing their lack of continuity with ancient Macedonia and the historical right to this name (much like the xenopejorative *Moskovit* [“Muscovite”] that nationalists in Ukraine often use to refer to Russians, the implication being that the right to the toponym “Rus” actually belongs to Ukraine).

When comparing the corpora of xenopejoratives in the languages in the Balkan sprachbund, the following features stand out:

- the presence of formally and semantically coinciding elements (both in closely related languages, for example Serb./Croat. and Maced. *Tsrnchuga* and *shiptar*, and in distantly related languages, cf. Alb. and Serb./Croat. *гaбeль/gabel*, *чepгap/cegar*, Maced., Bulg. and Alb. *мангал/манга/manga*, Serb./Croat., Maced., Bulg. and Alb. *жабap/zhabar*, and Serb./Croat., Maced., Bulg. and Rom. *чуфyт/cifut*);
- the presence of common areal beliefs about the origin of other peoples (Gr. Καράγυφτος, Maced. *guptin* and Rom. *faraon*) and stereotypes (Alb. *arixhi* Arom. *Ursar*), including those that do not coincide with stereotypes that exist in other cultural regions (for example, Serb./Croat., Bulg., Maced. and Alb. *жабap/zhabar*, and Rom. *broscar* all suggest that it is the Italians, and not the French, who eat frogs);
- the sexuality model is poorly represented compared, for example, with Russian and English (which can be explained by the puritanism of lexicographers in these countries, as traditional thinking continues to dominate in Balkan cultures, and the relevant lexemes of a given semantic group, if any, must be particularly taboo).

We can thus observe (bear in mind that these figures are true right now, but will inevitably change as new data is collected) that the most frequently encountered models within the Balkan sprachbund are linguistic (6/7) and general behavioural (6/7), followed closely by alimentary (5/7); the undisputed leaders are the corporeal (7/7) and undifferentiated models (7/7, mainly various kinds of suffix formations with a generalized negative meaning, which is unsurprising, as all the Balkan languages have a rich word-formation morphology; and borrowings, which, again, is not particularly surprising, given the high degree of linguistic syncretism within the languages of the Balkan sprachbund). The sexuality (1/7), heterotopic (3/7), and historical precedent

(4/7) models are relatively poorly represented. However, there is an asymmetry in how these models are represented in the Balkan languages, as well as in the breadth of coverage of the nominated groups: the linguistic and general behavioural models are more universal than the corporeal model, for example, as they are applicable to a wide range of referents, while the corporeal model applies almost exclusively (with rare exceptions) to a given ethnic group.

Undifferentiated pejoratives nevertheless contain an interesting layer of Turkish borrowings (for example *чуфым/cifut*) that is present in one way or another in all Balkan languages (according to I. Sedakova, “the presence of Turkish words is an essential feature of the dictionaries of all languages that make up the Balkan sprachbund. Many scholars believe that the study of Turkishisms is one of the most important tasks of Balkan studies (Sedakova 2014). In and of itself, this layer does not indicate anything from the point of view of internal form, since borrowings in the recipient language can rarely be said to have an internal form at all. It does, however, fit into an existing trend, namely, that there are many words of Turkic origin among the pejoratives that exist in the Balkan languages; often, a neutral word of autochthonous origin will have a Turkic synonym with an expressive component (cf. Russian pair *голова* [*golova*] and *башка* [*bashka*], both of which mean “head”), and perhaps the Turkic origin itself can thus be interpreted as a marker of negative connotation. According to many experts, this is indeed the case. N. Stoyanova, for example, notes the following about the Bulgarian language: “for the most part, Turkish words are recognized by native speakers as foreign words and are not used in the literary languages. They are often used to express a special, pejorative attitude” or “to create a specific expression, a playful ironic tone,” for example, a Bulgarian might use the Turkic word *tapia* to mean “permission, certificate, ID papers” (Stoyanova 2007),³³ in the same way that a Russian speaker might use *ausweis*.

Rather surprisingly, dehumanization does not appear particularly frequently, even when talking about peoples with whom armed conflicts have taken place. Given the connection between the “other, stranger, outsider,” etc., and the concepts of the chthonic and otherworldly in the mythological picture of the world of the Balkan peoples, one would expect to encounter dehumanization of the demonic type, that is, likening people to supernatural beings. However, to our surprise, this is not observed either. The only exceptions here, as with the pejoratives associated with appearance, are a handful of nicknames for gypsies (Rom. *cioară, coțofană, balaur*) and the isolated Albanian ethnonym *-viç*, which has a multi-layered semantic structure. We believe that this apparent discrepancy can be explained by the fact that mythological ideas belong to the category of archaisms, the passive layer of the concept, to use Y. Stepanov’s terminology,³⁴ while the xenopejoratives used in the language, which do, in a sense, reflect mythological thinking, are based to a greater extent on synchronic representations, that is, on the active layer of the concept.

³³ Staynova M. 1964. За пейоризацията на турцизмите в българския език. Български език. 3. P. 183–186.

³⁴ Stepanov Y. S. 2004. *Dictionary of Russian Culture*. Akademicheskyy Proekt.

A significant problem for classifying one or another CP to one specific model turned out to be a kind of “lexical synthetosemy,” that is, the tendency to combine several interrelated motivating features in the same word (or even root). For example, the Romanian xenopejorative *coțofană* implies a likeness to an animal (dehumanization, that is, a manifestation of the corporeal model), a moral and behavioural characteristic, and an indication of a vestimentary pattern. This ethnophaulism thus falls into three categories at once, which complicates statistical calculations.

Another even more significant problem is the scarcity of relevant materials and records (and for some languages, such as Aromanian, this applies not only to xenopejoratives, but also to vocabulary in general), hence the limited data we had to work with. The data on Aromanian, for example, was extracted from a single source, a work by P. Papahagi, and the only conclusion we can thus draw from this is that further research is required, including (and even primarily) field work.

Similarly, the large number of corporeal pejoratives, but the narrow focus of the corporeal model itself in comparison with the alimentary and general behavioural models, may be explained by the fact that the lifestyle of the Balkan peoples is more or less the same (at one time, some were predominantly semi-nomadic shepherds, others were settled farmers, others were fishermen, traders and sailors, but over time, as these ethnic groups continued to mix, they began to adopt each other's ways of life), as is their appearance – a result of the large number of inter-ethnic marriages (the only exception here, in terms of both lifestyle and appearance, are gypsies, which would explain why they are the referents of the majority of bodily and behavioural pejoratives). It turns out that the key factors separating the peoples of the Balkans are language, religion (and the associated religious customs, although they do demonstrate a high degree of syncretism), cuisine, and various kinds of historical grievances (the historical precedent model is typically associated with these aspects, cf. the *Ustasha–chetnitsy* pair). The prototypical Balkan stranger is thus someone who looks different, behaves differently, lives, prays and eats differently, and, above all, speaks differently.

Conclusions

Our study of the image of the “other” (“stranger,” “alien”) in the worldview of the Balkan peoples, based on a comparative analysis of the internal forms of xenopejoratives used in the respective languages, revealed that the most frequently used models are (in ascending order): general behavioural, alimentary, linguistic, corporeal, and undifferentiated. From this, we can conclude that the prototypical stranger in the Balkan picture of the word is someone who looks, speaks and acts differently, with the latter two being far more prevalent in terms of the number of referents. This is likely due to the fact that in a region where peoples have frequently, and over an extended period of time, intermingled, intermarried, and borrowed elements of each other's national dress, customs, cuisine, and lifestyle, language continued to be one of the most powerful identifying factors by which one community could oppose itself to another

(the only exception here is the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, who speak virtually the same language – here, the historical precedent model would be the primary identifying factor).

Judging by the number of pejoratives, it is Gypsies who appear to be the most important referent, the “significant other,” as it were (and not the Turks, as we initially assumed). The Romani lived for centuries in the Balkan-Carpathian region without mixing with other peoples, maintaining an identity that was distinct from their neighbours, a unique (nomadic) lifestyle, and a manner of living that was condemned by those whose culture did not involve moving from place to place. The traditional closeness of the gypsy community to outsiders undoubtedly played a role here, and real ideas about their way of life were largely replaced by myths.

The conclusions we offer here should be considered preliminary. New material and a clearer classification system would likely change these conclusions in one way or another. That said, we nevertheless hope that this study, while doing nothing to mitigate the ethno-political tension in the Balkans (it would be naïve and presumptuous to assume that it would), will at least make the roots of this tension more understandable, and the further development of the ethno-political situation in the region more predictable, and thus more manageable.

Abbreviations used in this paper:

Alb. – Albanian; Arom. – Aromanian; Bulg. – Bulgarian; Eng. – English; Ger. – German; Greek – modern Greek; Gyp. – Romany; Hung. – Hungarian; It. – Italian; Maced. – Macedonian; Rom. – Romanian; Rus. – Russian; Serb./Croat. – Serbo-Croatian; Turk. – Turkish.

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