

JIES Reviews

Linguistics

Светлана Янакиева. Тракийската хидронимия [Svetlana Yanakijeva. *Thracian Hydronymy*] (= *Studia Thracica* 12). Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo "Prof. Marin Drinov" 2009. 232 p. ISBN 978-954-322-386-2. Lv. 7.-.

A certain stagnation in Thracian linguistic studies based principally or entirely on the analysis of place-names which we observe for the last decade or so¹ is nicely interrupted by the timely publication of this monograph. This new book by Svetlana Yanakijeva is of importance for place-name studies in ancient Thrace and also aims at clarification of some very important details of the Thracian language in general. It consists of an Introduction, two parts, a conclusion, a bibliography and an English resumé. In the Introduction (p. 7-12) the author states the aims and methods of her research. Although fragments of Thracian hydronymy have been analyzed by scholars, predominantly from Bulgaria (S. Mladenov, V. Georgiev, I. Duridanov, to mention just a few names), it has never been dealt with comprehensively, and with this publication Yanakijeva bridges this gap in Thracian and onomastic studies. In defining the geographical restrictions of her research, namely the Carpathian mountains in the north, the Aegean Sea in the south, the Black Sea (and north-western Asia Minor) in the east and the basin of the Morava and Vardar rivers in the west, she briefly addresses some fundamental questions of Palaeobalkan studies, such as the Thracian / Daco-Moesian controversy, to be returned to in a greater detail in the second part of this publication.

¹For some recent important work on the Thracian language see S. Yanakieva, *Novi metody i podhodi v izsledvaneto na trakijските ezikovi ostatsi v Bulgaria v načaloto na XXI vek*, in *Balkanskoye yazykonaniye. itogi i perspektivy* (= *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana* 5/1, 2009) St. Petersburg 2009, p. 322-333.

The first part of the book (p.13-142) is an extremely useful collection of hydronyms from the selected area recorded in classical (and /or early Byzantine) sources, and several known from epigraphy, arranged alphabetically. Each entry contains a quote (or quotes) from the source(s) in which a hydronym is attested, sometimes followed by important philological comments (as, for instance, on p. 17 s.v. Ἀθύρας). Then comes a historical-geographical commentary, in which identification of the geographical object is provided (if known), and this is followed by a purely linguistic discussion. The author collects the views of various authors on the linguistic attribution and underlying etymology of a given hydronym with bibliographical references. Needless to say, these can be quite controversial, and in plenty of cases the existing etymologies are incompatible. As Yanakijeva (cf. p. 149-50) belongs to a group of scholars who remain very skeptical in regard to etymologizing the Thracian data in general, these etymological equilibristics not infrequently are aptly labeled in the book as “unsure” or “not trustworthy”. This part of the book provides the academic community with a definite corpus of hydronymic objects of ancient Thrace and is indispensable for anyone involved in early toponymic studies of the Balkans and adjacent territories. It is also very useful to have an overview of the existing discussions, which is fairly comprehensive.² A broad and ample approach to the data has allowed Yanakijeva to get rid of phantom river-names (see, e.g., s.v. *Anamus* on p. 23) and offer valuable historical-geographical comments (e.g., s.v. *Appion* on p. 29). She also aptly considers rivers deduced from place-names, even when this deduction is claimed to be only possible, as s.v. **Serus* on p. 126.³ As

²Thus, for example, I have not found references to a number of valuable discussions s.v. Πυρετός, identified by Yanakijeva as Thracian. For a rejection of an Iranian linguistic attribution still popular some time ago see S. Tokhtas'ev, Problema skifskogo yazyka v sovremennoi nauke, in *Ethnic Contacts and Cultural Exchanges North and West of the Black Sea from the Greek Colonization to the Ottoman Conquest* (Iași 2005), p. 63-4; for a new Iranian etymology of the river-name see J. Cheung, *Studies in the Historical Development of the Ossetic Vocalism* (Wiesbaden 2002), p. 14 et passim. For other views see the discussion between W. Schmid and G. Schramm in *Indogermanische Forschungen* 81 (1976), p. 438 and 84 (1979), p. 72. These discussions normally consider also a later attested form of the river-name.

³A river-name **Marisca* deduced by Veselin Beshevliev from a

noted above, there seems to be no need to go into further etymological discussion of the majority of the instances considered by the author, and I probably should just remark here that the river name Βαρβύσης (var. Βάρβυσος, p. 48) may be of onomatopoeic origin. Yanakijeva fairly admits that in certain cases a linguistic attribution of a hydronym remains disputable. It may be noted in parenthesis that the author does not consider several frameworks of the analysis of ancient hydronymy which may be relevant for the study, such as G. Schramm's hypothesis or F. Villar's theory.⁴

The second part of the monograph is dedicated to the study of aspects of the Thracian language based on the data of Thracian hydronymy and consists of four chapters. In the first chapter (p. 143-147) the author offers semantic and formal classifications of the river-names. Due to the obvious problems related to the etymological data the former analysis remains very tentative, and the majority of examples are accompanied by comments containing "if", "possibly", etc. The formal structural classification considers word-formation patterns. Interestingly, Yanakijeva here differentiates between Greek and Thracian models of suffixation, but does not provide a list of Thracian suffixes, which is given in a rather schematic way ("suffixes in -r-", etc.) on pp. 169-70. I think that generally this is quite justified, as there cannot be complete certainty, that, say, Ἄραρος, Κύδαρος, and Πιδάρας indeed belong to the same model and contain the same suffix⁵. It may also be the case that some of the data

settlement name *Transmarisca* is not discussed here, probably in view of the disputable linguistic attribution of the place-name and continuing discussions in regard of the interpretation of its second component; see A. Falileyev, *Vostočnije Balkany na karte Ptolemeja. Kritiko-bibliografičeskije razyskanija* (München 2006), p. 71-72.

⁴See, e.g., G. Schramm, *Reki severnogo pričernomorya* (Moscow 1997) and F. Villar, *Indoeuropeos y no Indoeuropeos en la Hispania Prerromana* (Salamanca 2000).

⁵Apart from general uncertainties of morphological models in Thracian due to the character of the data, there is always a risk that a non-Thracian example may be introduced into the discussion, thus compromising a theory. It may also be recalled that the importance of separating historically heterogeneous sequences from actual toponymic formants has long been stressed, cf. in this respect an elegant illustration provided by the late Yu. V. Otkupschikov (*Dogrečeskij substrat* (Leningrad 1988), p. 95):

listed under 2.1.2.2 “names with Thracian suffixes” may rather belong to section 2.2., where compounded names are collected. The second chapter of this part (p. 149-176) discusses linguistic peculiarities of Thracian hydronymy and its title echoes the name of Detshev’s famous book, *Karakteristika na trakijskija ezik*. It is ultimately important that the author explicitly states (p. 149) that her approach to the analysis is radically different from that accepted by Detshev and a famous group of students of Thracian, and indeed she is interested here not in etymologies, but rather attempts to clarify certain traces of the language on the basis of variations of spelling of a given hydronym, and also in comparing these with the other Thracian data. Of the results obtained from this study quite a few are extremely relevant for the study of the Thracian language. Thus, an uncertainty of the quantity of vowels in Thracian observed in a number of recent publications⁶ should be dealt with in a more positive vein: Yanakijeva argues (p. 156-7) that the hydronymic data contains at least [ě], [õ] and [ã], [ē], [ī], [ū]. It is also important that her study (p. 158-160) points to the necessity to reject the *Lautverschiebung* postulated for Thracian consonantism by quite a few authorities. Generally, the analysis shows that the dichotomy between Thracian and Daco-Moesian, accepted by several authorities, does not find proof in the data observed. There are other interesting insights on these pages dedicated to phonetic and morphology which cannot be discussed in this short review.⁷ On pp. 171-176 Yanakijeva offers a list of parallels between the river-names and the rest of the Thracian data. She admits that some parallels may be coincidental⁸, and warns that these should

Dubl-*in*, Pušk-*in* and Berl-*in*.

⁶E.g., P. Dimitrov, *Thracian Language and Greek and Thracian Epigraphy* (Newcastle upon Tyne 2009), p. 146.

⁷Some of the suggestions presented there may cause criticism, such as, e.g., an attempt to see a metathesis in Βρεγε-/Βεργ-, and certain conclusions on Thracian phonetics may find counterarguments.

⁸Thus, the personal names Γολας and Γολης quoted by her on p. 172 possibly do not constitute a proper parallel for the hydronym she discusses, as these have been claimed to be of non-Thracian origins; see S. Tokhtas’ev, *Iz onomastiki Severnogo Pričernomorya. XIX. Maloazijskije imena na Bospore (V–IV vv. do n. e.)*, in *Vestnik drevnej istorii* 2007, p. 173

be treated cautiously. Chapter 3 (p. 177-183) deals with the parallels to Thracian river-names from outside of Thrace, with the same caveats as in the preceding section. The results are interesting and sometimes quite unexpected: a considerable amount of parallels come from north and central Greece and western Asia Minor, while *Balticum* offers only a few of them. It is also worthy of note that Yanakijeva's study has shown that there is no need to use the label "Old European" in a discussion of hydronymy in ancient Thrace (p. 183). The last chapter of the second part (p. 185-196) discusses the validity of the discussed data for the analysis of the Hellenization/Romanization of Thrace. The author shows that ancient Thrace preserved its hydronyms in the Hellenistic and Roman age, and only a few rivers received Greek or Latin names, while the situation, say, in Asia Minor shows a completely different set of statistics. This observation may be used as an additional clue to the understanding of the linguistic situation in this part of the world in antiquity.

The book contains very useful maps and is nicely printed. I have no doubt that it will become a standard reference publication on Thracian hydronymy and an important research tool for the study of the Thracian language. The competence of the author and the extreme caution with which she deals with the tremendously difficult data makes this publication a most important contribution to Paleobalkan studies in recent times.

Alexander Falileyev
 Department of Welsh
 Aberystwyth University
 Old College
 King Street
 Aberystwyth
 Ceredigion
 SY23 2AX
 axf@aber.ac.uk

with further bibl. The place-name Γολόη quoted here may indeed be Thracian but still remains problematic in its own right; see A. Falileyev, *Ancient Place-Names of the Eastern Balkans: Defining Celtic Areas, in In search of Celtic Tylis in Thrace* (Sofia 2010), p. 125 (bibl.). The form for which this is cited as a *comparandum*, Θιαγόλα, may be non-Thracian.