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## BULGARIAN EQUIVALENTS OF CULINARY LEXICAL BALKANISMS

**Abstract:** Lexical Balkanisms most often keep the form of the language from which they derive and the close semantic meaning they carry. Culinary Balkanisms (predominantly Turkisms) in the dialects of the Bulgarian language share the fate of lexical Balkanisms in general – their usage is restricted or they are replaced by native equivalents.

**Keywords:** culinary Balkanisms; native equivalents

The term *lexical Balkanisms* is one of the most fundamental in the Bulgarian etymological dictionary. It refers not only to the common lexical units which are an integral part of the vocabularies of the languages of the Balkan Sprachbund (Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian, Albanian, the successors of Serbo-Croatian), but also to Turkish, a member of a different language group (Turkic), which for centuries exerted an exceptionally strong influence, both geographically and historically, on the lexicon of the Indo-European languages of the Balkans. This influence is most palpable in the culinary lexicon, because Balkan cuisine, despite certain national specifics, has a pronounced Oriental character. Greek is in second place as is the source of loanwords adopted by other languages. Romanian has more limited influence, which appears to some extent where the processing of certain corn products is concerned. Consequently, there is a basis to discuss Balkan lexical Turkisms, Balkan Grecisms, Balkan Romanianisms etc. The issue of Bulgarian (Slavic) lexical influence in the Balkans in the field of culinary vocabulary has not been studied so far and remains to be resolved in the future. Today there is occasional evidence of the intermediary role of the Bulgarian language even with regard to Western European languages. For example, the dictionary entry for *йогурт* ‘yogurt’ (BER. 2. 1979: 104) reads: “From Turk. *yogurt*; also borrowed in Greek *γιαόρτι*, Serb. *jožurt*, Fr. *yagourt*, *yoghourt* (according to Bloch-Wartburg, it was borrowed from Bulgarian as early as 1432 and mentioned in French travel notes), Ger. *Joghurt*, Rus. *яурт*.”

Apart from acting as borrower, the Bulgarian language has also put up resistance to foreign influence by preserving and creating its native equivalents of the Balkan loanwords – a fact that is at the basis of this study. Thus, the domesticated *йогурт* stands in contrast to fully Bulgarian analogues: the literary standard *кисело мляко* ‘sour milk’ and the dialect forms *кв̀асено мля̀ко*, *подк̀васено мля̀ко*, *л’у̀то мля̀ко*, *кв̀асеница*, *кв̀асеня̀к*, *кв̀асенѝк*, *п̀одк̀ус* ‘fermented, sour, pungent milk’ and others. Lexical Balkanisms generally keep the form of the language that they come from and the close semantics that they carry. In the predominant number of cases, they belong to the same thematic circle of lexical units (here, of course, the subject is the culinary lexicon). In every language in which they are present they already have their own fate – they acquire new meanings that they do not have in the source language. For example, the Turkish Balkanism *катъ̀к* < *катик* ‘an addition to a meal (cheese, butter, jam etc.)’ has acquired new meanings in Bulgarian dialects: ‘dish’ (the regions of the Central Rhodopes; Avas, Alexandroupoli area); ‘boiled, condensed milk’ (regions of Troyan; Kravenik, Sevlievo area; Silistra); ‘cream’ (Enina, Kazanlak region); ‘type of cheese’ (Stara Zagora region); ‘hardened suet’ (regions of Sachanli, Gyumyurdzhina). For more details, see BER. 2. 1979: 279. In short, the foreign lexical Balkanism has preserved only its form and its most general (“culinary”) meaning, but in the Bulgarian language it has developed completely new and different meanings. Namely because of these peculiarities of borrowing, this study cites only the forms of the source language and of the Balkan languages in which they are found. The meanings (most often modified) are cited only as they are found in the Bulgarian language and its dialects.

The brief information cited on foreign words has only an introductory character – it helps to clarify the term *lexical Balkanisms*. Central to this study is the issue of their *Bulgarian equivalents (old and new) that compete with the loanwords*.

The material for this study has been excerpted mainly from the Archives of the Dictionary of Bulgarian Dialects in the Department of Bulgarian Dialectology and Linguistic Geography of the Institute for Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. To this main body of evidence, source material has been added from the expeditions for drafting an interactive culinary map of the Bulgarian language territory. For the numerous references used here, see the attached bibliography at the end.

## 1. Plant-based foods and drinks

### 1.1. фасул ~ боб ‘beans’; грах ‘peas’; вариво ‘боб’ ‘legume ‘beans’’.

– The loanword фасул in the Bulgarian language is included in the circle of the Balkan culinary lexemes for the legume ‘боб’ ‘beans’ (cf. Gr. *φασόλι*, Turk. *fasulya*, Rom. *fasòle*, Alb. *fasul*) after the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to BDA. 2001:424, the area of distribution of *фасул* is predominantly southern (the regions of Malko Tarnovo, Edirne, Haskovo, Plovdiv, Xanthi, Alexandroupoli, Petrich, Gotse Delchev, Thessaloniki, Kostur). With a narrower meaning, it continues to the northwest (the regions of Pazardzhik, Sofia, Tran, Tsaribrod, and Niš).

– The Bulgarian, i.e. the native, analogue боб of the borrowing фасул is found in most Slavic languages, and prior to the importation from America of the plant *Phascolus vulgaris*, боб was a name for other, older and native plants from the *Fabaceae* family (peas, broad beans) – all of them with an oval-shaped seed. This semantic regrouping continued to take place later, too (cf. *бобули* ‘corn’, *влашки боб* [‘Vlach beans’] ‘potatoes’, *червен боб* [‘red beans’] and *черен боб* [‘black beans’] ‘broad beans’ etc.). Before *Phascolus vulgaris* was imported from the New World, the plants (and respectively, the boiled food prepared from them) accounted for the main food of the Slavs, including the Bulgarian Slavs as well. For this reason, the newcomer from the same plant family took on the name of what had become a food that the Bulgarians boiled almost daily, and they began to consider it the most typical representative of their national cuisine.

The term боб is found throughout the entire regions of Moesia, the Balkan Range and the Sub-Balkan Range. In the southwest it is characteristic of the regions of Bosilegrad, Dupnitsa, Kyustendil, Blagoevgrad, Gotse Delchev, western Gevgeli, Voden and Korçë.

It is curious that for exactly the same reasons, the common Bulgarian generic name вариво, semantically related to boiling any kind of vegetables, has in some regions become specific (cf. вариво with the meaning of ‘боб’ /beans/ in the region of Drama and in the northeast of Alexandroupoli). The native forms грах//граф ‘peas’ in Central and Western Macedonia are also the result of the commingling of the native concept of боб with the specific term грах in the Bulgarian lands.

### 1.2. качма̀к, бракада̀н, мамал̀уга, мала̀й ~ варен̀ик; влашен̀ик, д̀увяк, дивен̀ик, ф̀кòтел ‘качма̀к’ ‘grits, polenta, cornmeal porridge’.

– The loanwords from Turkish *качма̀к*, *бракада̀н* (cf. *kaçatak*, *barkadan*) and from Romanian *мамал̀уга* (cf. *mămăligă*) are found across most of the Bulgarian language territory: *качма̀к* (almost in the entire area of the central and northwestern dialects, Thracian and Rhodope dialects, and also in significant parts of Vardar and Aegean Macedonia); *бракада̀н* – originally related to *бакъ̀р* ‘copper’,

and more specifically, to the copper pot used to boil cornmeal porridge, and later also to the folk reanalysis of the method of preparation (*бъркане* ‘stirring’) on native soil (regions of Skopje, Veles, Prilep, Ohrid, Voden, Petrich, Blagoevgrad). The loanword from Romanian *мамалуга* is typical of the Northeast (the regions of Ruse, Silistra, northern Dobrich area, northern Shumen area), but is also common in the regions of Sliven and Yambol. In this sense, the names of this dish in the Bulgarian language have a predominantly Balkan character (for more details, see BDA 2001: 422, notably Map L 28 “Words for cornmeal porridge”). The connections that the Bulgarian language made via *качамак* with other Balkan languages (Modern Gr. *κατσαμάκι*, Alb. *kaçatâk*, Aromanian *căciutâc*// *căciutâc*, Serb. and Croat. *качамâк*) provide further evidence for this conclusion.

– Nevertheless, though over a much smaller (eastern) territory, the Bulgarian language has cultivated its own names for this dish: *влáшенìк*, referring to the basic dish in Wallachia from where it arrived in Bulgaria (regions of Varna, Provadiya, Preslav, eastern Veliko Tarnovo area, Burgas); *вáренìк*, through the conversion of the generic name meaning ‘a dish obtained by the method of preparation – boiling’ into a specific name (the regions of Malko Tarnovo, Lozengrad, Midiya). Cf. *вáривò* above: 1. Dish made by boiling; and 2. Beans.

1.3. армèя; лáхана; кард’ò, кардìя ~ кùсело зèле; зèленица; расòл; пресòл ‘sauerkraut’.

– The loanwords from Greek *армèя*, *лáхана* and *кард’ò* in Bulgarian dialects constitute a central part of the Bulgarian culinary vocabulary (cf. the Greek *арμη*, *λάχανο*, *карδια* – figuratively – and adopted as Turk. *lahna*, Alb. *lákna*, Rom. *lahaniu*). According to Map L 27 “Names for sauerkraut” in BDA 2001, the area of distribution of *армèя* is, strangely enough, not in Southern Bulgaria, but in Bulgaria’s northern regions of Pleven, Nikopol, Veliko Tarnovo, and Varna. Meanwhile, *лáхана* is found in the southern Bulgarian regions of Burgas, Elhovo, Svilengrad, Haskovo, Asenovgrad, Plovdiv, Dimotika, and Gyumyurdzhina. The area of distribution of *кард’ò*, cf. Gr. *Καρδια*, originally meaning ‘heart, core’, and then also metaphorically ‘cabbage’, ‘sauerkraut’, is small (in the regions of Smolyan and Xanthi).

– The Bulgarian equivalents are: *зèле* ‘cabbage’, *зèленица*, *расòл* ‘brine’, and *пресòл*. These are found mostly in the north (Moesia and the Balkan Range) – *зèле*, *зèленица*, *кùсело зèле*, and in the south (in the larger part of the lands adjacent to the rivers Iskar, Vardar, Struma, Mesta, as well as in Strandzha) – *расòл* and *пресòл*. In short, the southern regions that have direct contact with the Greek language use native (Bulgarian) names. Overall, the larger part of the Bulgarian linguistic territory, both to the north and to the south, has its own native counterparts. This areal picture speaks to the complexity of Balkan contact through borrowing. It is clear that in a series of cases, it has an indirect territorial character. It is possible that, particularly in the south, old Bulgarian culinary names for ‘sauerkraut’ put up resistance to the Greek invasion and withstood its pressure by preserving their original forms. A compromise case in the Veliko Tarnovo region features an adjective-noun combination *фтáсало зèле* ‘fermented cabbage’, where the adjective is Greek and the noun – Bulgarian.

1.4. ошáф (ошáв) ~ сùшèлки; сушùлки, сùшалки, шушèлки, шушùлки etc. – all with the root *сух* ‘dry’ – ‘dried fruit, dried fruit compote’.

– The loanword (*х*)*ошáф* (*ошáф*), with which the Bulgarian language enters into the Balkan lexicon, has oriental origins. It comes from Turkish (*hoşaf*) and has entered the latter from Kurdish *hoşav* or Persian *hōšāb*, *hošab*, with the etymology ‘pleasant water’. The forms with *ошáф* are more characteristic of the eastern Bulgarian dialects of Strandzha, Thrace, and the Balkan Range, but are also found in transitional dialects between the East and the West, such as the Bansko-Razlog.

– Numerous Bulgarian analogues with the reanalyzed root *сух*- ‘dry-’ (regardless of phonetic, morphological, and word-formation changes) have also been recorded in the east, in a “dappled”

linguistic (*x*)οιιάφ area (the regions of Sliven, Elena, Ruse, Silistra, Stara Zagora, Koprivshtitsa, Pirdop, Sofia, the Rhodopes). There they are found also with the second meaning of ‘dried fruit compote’ in expressions like *nix om cушѐлкume* (*I drank some of the dried fruit compote*). There are multiple such examples because for many centuries, Bulgarians preferred boiling food from cultivated and wild plants on a daily basis, which made the local cuisine dietetic and healthy.

## 2. Foods from animal sources

### 2.1. чевермѐ (чевермѐ) ~ пѐченѐк, пѐченица ‘roast lamb (or pig) on a skewer’.

– The loanword *чевермѐ* in the Bulgarian language is one of the Balkan culinary lexemes (cf. Turk. *çevirme*; Gr., obs. *τσιβερμές*). It entered Bulgarian and Greek from Turkish. In Greek, it is no longer in use. In Bulgarian, the loanword *чевермѐ* is found across a large territory. In the Central Rhodopes, its leading form is *чевермѐ*. Among Bulgarian Muslims it means ‘roast lamb on a skewer’, while among Bulgarian Christians, the meaning of ‘roast pig on a skewer’ can additionally be found.

– The Bulgarian equivalents of *чевермѐ* are *пѐченѐк* (regions of Bansko, Razlog) and *пѐченица* (region of Yeniköy - Paşayenice) – that is, they were created based on the more general method of preparation – *печене* ‘roasting’.

2.2. *капамà* ~ *задушѐно*; *задушѐна гѐзба* ‘stewed meat dish with (or without) vegetables’. With the Turkish loanword *капамà* in Bulgarian, the language increased the instances of lexical Balkanisms (cf. Turk. *карата*, Gr. *καπαμας*, Rom. *саратă*, Arom. *сăрăтă*, Alb. *каратà*, Croat. *карàта* and Serb. *капàма*). The stewed dish (“under a lid”) is found in the southern regions (Pirin, Thrace, Plovdiv).

– Bulgarian counterparts – *задушѐно*; *задушѐна (или уварѐна) гѐзба* ‘stew, a stewed or boiled dish’ – are more characteristic of the Balkan Range regions (such as around Lovech and Troyan).

### 2.3. шкембѐ; тумбàк, гайде ~ бàба (бàбе, бàбица, бàбичка); дѐдо (дѐдец); старѐц (старѐк) ‘diced meat preserved with various seasonings in the duodenum or the stomach of a pig’.

– It is quite clear that some of the indicated meanings of the Turkisms have originated via metonymy. It is well known that Muslims do not consume pork. From a broader perspective, the Bulgarian equivalents also emerged based on a transfer of meaning – either referring to the shape, to the wrinkled appearance of the obtained product resembling the skin of old people, or to other attributes.

The Turkisms *işkembe*, *tumbak*, *gajda*, though they are also found in other languages with a different meaning, are only loanwords by origin. In the Bulgarian language, the names found for this type of food include: *шкембѐ* (region of Lovech), *тумбàк* (Moesian, Balkan Range, and Thracian dialects), and *гайде* (region of Plovdiv).

– The Bulgarian equivalents *бàба* ‘grandmother, old woman’ (*бàбе, бàбица, бàбичка*) are typical of the regions of Pirin, Plovdiv, Kotel, the Central Balkan Range, and Pleven; *дѐдо* ‘grandfather, old man’ (*дѐдец*) are typical of the regions of Strandzha, Razlog, Plovdiv, and Stara Zagora; *старѐц* ‘old man’ (*старѐк*) are typical of the regions of Northeastern and Southwestern Bulgaria.

### 2.4. бàхур ~ дрѐбевѐица; дѐнешник; кървавѐица ‘finely diced pig offal preserved with seasonings in its large intestine for quick consumption’.

– The Turkish words *bagır* or *bagır, bagırsak, barsak*, related to terms for ‘offal of an animal’ are at the basis of the Bulgarianized *бàхур* (Strandzha, Western Rhodopes, Dobrudzha). Regarding the names of pig offal and of the respective dishes made from it in the Turkish language, no information is available – and this is only natural.

– The Bulgarian lexical equivalents of *б̀ахур* include: *др̀обевица* (Teteven region), *д̀ънешник* (Stara Zagora region), *к̀ървавица* (across most of the Bulgarian language territory). All of them refer to the method of preparation – ‘stuffing, dicing (meat), preserving with blood’.

2.5. *сутляш* ~ *мл̀ечница* (derived from *milk*); *д̀вчену̀к* (derived from *sheep*); *мл̀яко с ориз* ‘boiled milk with rice (groats)’.

– The Turkism *сутляш* (*sütli aş*), literally ‘dairy dish’, is also found in Albanian (*sytliaç*), Croatian (*sutlijaš*), and Serbian (*сутлијаш*). In Bulgarian dialects it has the following variants: *сутл`ач* (regions of Kostur, Malko Tarnovo), *сутл`аиш* (region of Kazanlak); *шукл`аиш* (region of Pazardzhik). The version used across the larger part of the language territory is *сутл`аиш*.

– The native equivalents are: *мл̀еч(е)ница* (region of Lovech), *д̀вченик*, *мл̀яко с ориз* ‘milk with rice’ (regions of Stara Zagora, Sofia and Pleven).

2.6. *балм̀уш*, *юшум̀ер* ~ *с̀иренев* ‘shepherd’s porridge from fresh cheese and flour’.

– The Turkism *балм̀уш* and the Turkish dialect forms *belmuş*, *belmiş* are not only found in Bulgarian with various meanings related to a porridge of cheese and flour, but also in languages from the Balkan-Carpathian region (cf. Rom. *balmoș*, Hung. *bálmos*). According to BER. 1. 1971: 104, the form in Bulgarian “by way of folk etymology was reanalyzed as *white man* because of the whiteness of cheese. A Proto-Bulgarian origin may also be supposed.” There are different phonetic variants of the name in the regions of Lovech and Troyan – *б`ал м̀уш*, and in the Morava Valley – *бел муж*. The Turkism *йушум̀ер* (in different variants *ишм̀ер*, *ишмерй̀йа*, *ишмерй̀н*, *йушмерй̀йа*, *ушм̀ер* and others) is found in Strandzha, the Rhodopes, and Aegean Thrace.

– The Bulgarian equivalent of the indicated forms is recorded in Novo Selo, Vidin region – *с̀иренев*.

From this overview of culinary lexical Balkanisms in the Bulgarian language, it is clear that they are beginning to be replaced by native words. Many of them have already passed or are passing into the category of obsolete words, a process facilitated by the modernization of Balkan cuisine and the related terminology by means of loanwords from various languages of the world, mainly European languages. The process started long ago, but has intensified in our day. Long ago, for example, such a basic lexeme as *пейнѝр* (< Turk. *peynir* ‘cheese’) in the regions of Pirdop, Krumovgrad, and Smolyan was replaced by the native *с̀ирене* (*cheese*); *каварм̀а* (< Turk. *kavarma* ‘tucking, folding, frying’) in Strandzha was replaced by *запрѣжка* ‘fried thickening, roux’ (general Bulgarian); *кайган̀а* (< Turk. *kaygana* ‘fried eggs’) in the regions of Pleven, Sofia and Kotel was replaced with the general Bulgarian term *п̀ржени яйца* ‘fried eggs’ and the dialect word *п̀рженй̀ца* (derived from  *fry* – regions of Smolyan, Krumovgrad, Peshtera, Parvomay, Gotse Delchev, Ivaylovgrad); *локм̀а* (< Turk. *lokma* ‘a piece of something’), (Strandzha) with the general Bulgarian *мрѣвка* (*morsel*). It is curious that even the noun *кеба̀нче* (< Turk. *kebab*), widely popular at home, has a native counterpart *п̀ечѣнка* (derived from *roast* – the Rhodopes) which, however, has failed to replace the hybrid.

It can be presumed that the forms of *п̀ечѣнй̀ца* found in Thrace (the regions of Gyumyurdzhina, Xanthi, Demir Hisar, Alexandroupoli) could have been the basis for the replacement of the loan word *чеверм̀е*, with its unclear internal form (Turk. *çevirme* ‘roast lamb on a skewer’); in Bulgarian – ‘roast lamb or pig on a skewer’.

In the Greek language, this happened long ago. In dictionaries of the Modern Greek language, the word is absent because it has dropped out of usage. The only exception is the largest dictionary, that of Babiniotis (p. 627). The name *τσιβερμ̀ές* is included only in the “Table with selected older words of foreign origin which have been replaced by Greek words or have fallen out of use,” without a separate dictionary entry, however. Notably *чеверме* with the meaning ‘lamb roasted on a skewer; mainly associated with Easter’ has been replaced with the purely Greek word *οβελίαç* with the same meaning, which developed from an older native meaning – ‘bread baked on a skewer’. The etymology

of *οβελος* is ‘skewer’. The same has happened to the loan word in Serbian – (*јагне*) *на ражње*, in Romanian – *miel la proțap*, etc., with the general meaning of ‘(lamb) on poker//skewer//spit’.

The general conclusion is that the culinary Balkanisms (predominantly Turkisms) in the languages considered and in the dialects of the Bulgarian language share the fate of lexical Balkanisms – their usage becomes restricted or they are replaced by native equivalents.

#### Note:

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