Toponymical approach to the geographical research of the cultural heritage

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Toponyms represent an integral part of the intangible cultural heritage, one of the most stable and at the same time fragile. They perform very important address function, therefore play an enormous role in the vital activity of people and human communities throughout history. They are formed in historic-geographical landscapes under the influence of diverse natural and cultural factors, in specific linguistic and ethnic environments. A variety of natural conditions of the historic-geographical regions as a result of many-centurial continuous historical process led to their significant ethnic and religious variety, multiplicity of modes, major variability of identities and political aspirations, rich cultural heritage. The toponymic component (toponymic landscape) is the most important indicator of the landscape, and historic-geographical reconstruction of the stages of its development allows us to understand its evolution, to identify landscape-forming elements, valuable heritage objects, the foundations of the stability of multicomponent complexes in which modern socio-economic and cultural systems exist.

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The most important components of this historic-geographical landscapes are toponymy and monuments of architectural heritage, which are the most striking cultural indicators, which at the same time have special properties. By analogy with the laws of evolution of natural landscapes, the components of historic-geographical landscapes are characterized by the typicality or uniqueness of their attributes, thereby forming their own subsystems. Historic-geographical landscapes include both toponymic and architectural subsystems typical of their region, and unique, clearly distinguished by their features among other functionally similar geographical objects. Unique toponyms are inextricably intertwined with typical ones, but uncharacteristic of this or neighboring landscapes, which arose under unclear ethnological, linguistic and, in general, historic-geographical circumstances. Such toponyms usually include the most ancient, with an unclear etymology, transferred from very distant places during population migrations. Also, the geographical names of this category may have a relatively clear etymology, but at the same time they are formed under obviously unique circumstances, and therefore practically do not find analogues.

Historic-cartographical research provides invaluable data for place-name study. Old maps and written documents serve as the most important sources of knowledge about the toponymic, as well as the formation of geographical representations in various epochs. In the absence of direct written evidence of the construction of certain religious and even more defensive structures, special historical, cartographic and toponymic studies are of great importance. The most noteworthy geographical features and toponyms located within the borders of modern Moldavia and neighboring Romania and Ukraine are depicted on some of the oldest maps. In the 16th to 18th centuries, the foundation for detailed mapping of the territory and the creation of large-scale overview maps was laid, including the

works of B.Wapowski, M.Behaim, M.Waldseemüller, S.Münster, J.Castaldo, B.Agnese, M.Bronovius, G.Mercator, A.Ortelius, G.L.Beauplan, N.Sanson, G.M.Vischer, F.de Wit, C.Cantacuzino, G.Cantelli, N.de Fer, I. Goffman, V.M.Coronelli, I. Wolf, G.Valck, P.Schenk, J.B.Homann, D.Cantemir, M.Seutter, J.F.Schmidt, F.V.Bawr, G.A.B.Rizzi Zannoni, D.Filippidis and other outstanding cartographers of the Renaissance and Enlightenment. A comprehensive topographic study of the North-Western Black Sea Region began only at the turn of the 18th–19th centuries, when the first survey and topographic maps began to be compiled, which allowed users to not only get a general idea of the geography of the region, but also navigate the area quite confidently.

We can reveal a lot of a very important toponymical information due to the analysis of the historic-cartographical evolution in the context of the comprehensive geographical research of the cultural heritage of the North-Western Black Sea Region. For example on three cases representing different types of location: Kishinev (the capital of Moldavia), Bender (one of the oldest and biggest cities) and Rashkov (formerly a twin-town, two villages now).

The earliest mention of Kishinev in written sources was found in the letter of the Moldavian rulers of 1436 in Russian in the form *Акбашев(ъ) Кешенев(ъ)*. Then it is mentioned in 1466, 1525, and more often in Moldavian, as well as Turkish, Greek and Russian forms: *Кишинеул на Бъку, Кишинъу, Трещи, Кишинъул, Кишънъул, Kişinev, Кинъу, Къшнъул, Kesnoviou, Кишиневъ* (between 1576 and 1818). On old maps dating from the mid-16th century, drawn up in Latin, French, Italian, Russian, German, English, Romanian and other languages, the city is most often marked with a fortress icon, signed in various toponymic forms: *Tiras, Tiraz* (1550–1686), *Kisinau, Kisnou, Kichenow, Kisnul, Kisnow, Kischenove, Kisznou, Кишенау, Kischenau, Kiszenau, Kiszenul, Kiszenu, Kischniou, Kischnion,*

Кишеневъ, Кишенеу, Кишинеу, Kischenau (1688–1811), *Кишиневъ* (1817–1918), *Kischenew, Kischinew Kisinau, Kichinev* (1829–1887), *Chișeneu, Chișineu* (1868–1898), *Kishinev* (1911), *Kischinjew, Chișinău* (1917). The use of a complex of historic-geographical research methods (including toponymical) made it possible to create the basis for the reconstruction of the historic-geographical landscape of medieval Kishinev.

By the example of Bender, it is clear how over the course of several centuries the forms of toponyms have varied and the idea of the toponymic picture of the region has been formed and evolved. There are 5 main toponymic forms and 13 more variations on old maps: *Teime (Teinie), Tehinie (Tehinnie, Tehinníje, Tehynia, Tehyine, Tebinia, Fehynie, Tehiníoe), Tigina (Tegina, Tigino), Tekin (Tokin), Bender (Bendern, Бендеръ, Бендеры)*. Thanks to the systematization of cartographic sources, the evolution of architecture and urban planning is clearly displayed, the complexity and multi-stage development of the most important heritage site of the region – the Fortress of Bender becomes obvious. Thus, historic-cartographic research contributes to the solution of a number of interdisciplinary problems in history, architecture, art history, source study, toponymy and other areas.

The presumptive existence of a system of fortifications (castle, fortress) in the structure of the Rashkov complex is confirmed by the corresponding mapping on ancient geographic maps in 1652–1774, on which we can determine with a high degree of reliability the features of fortification plans of the left bank of Rashkov as they were made with a high degree of topographical accuracy because they were created for these purposes as such. The toponymic data extracted from those maps are also invaluable. There are at least six toponyms, which marked the modern Vadul-Rashkov or its parts in the 18th century: *Pestere* (*Pester*), *Kreminezow*, *Otak*, *Pestur* (*Pesthur*), *Wad* (*Wadu*), *Vadorashkov*. The etymology of toponyms is quite transparent. *Pesthere*

(*Peshtur*) is undoubtedly associated with the northern part of the Socola, where the largest cave complex has been preserved, which gave its name to the settlement, the archaeological traces of which were found in the southern part of modern Vad-Rashkov ("*pesthere*" in Moldavian means "caves"). Kreminetsov and Otak testify to the leading fortification function of the settlement: "kremenets" – Slavic "kremlin, stone fortification", in this case, perhaps, "upper town"; "otak" – "camp" from the Turks. "attack; otak" in the meaning "hem; tent, camp" – "lower town". Vad (ford) – the basis of the modern name, was the most stable. Thus, toponymic evidence obtained from ancient geographical and written references, in turn, also speaks of the antiquity of the studied objects of architecture, which have not lost completely cult and defensive features.

Despite such a rich toponymic heritage both intracity toponymy and its very own name in the early 1990s underwent another "toponymic repression" – a process while toponymy acts as an instrument and victim of political ambitions and confrontations. Urgent requests for the use of only one form (Romanian) in all languages were formulated. The position of such imperative standardization does not consider the centuries-old history of the name and the different languages' traditions, including various ethnic groups inhabiting the city itself. The striving for standardization in toponymy comes into conflict not only with phonetic and grammatical norms in different languages, but also with the history of the development of a particular toponym, the traditions of the ethnic groups inhabiting it. The examples of Kishinev, Bender and Rashkov are extremely indicative.

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