

Since the end of the 19th cent. there has been a view established that an idiom spoken in Ancient Macedonia (hence Macedonian) should be classified as an independent Indo-European language, the same as in the case of other languages of the Ancient Balkan with Greek, Thracian, Dacian or Illyrian. In recent scholarship, however, especially in dialectology of the Ancient Greek, the Macedonian has been interpreted as one of the dialects of Greek (a sort of para-Greek), originally of an Aeolic provenance, with strong influences from the north-western dialectal area as well as from the non-Greek languages of the Northern Balkans. It seems also possible that the inhabitants of the Lower Macedonia spoke an Aeolic dialect, and those from Upper Macedonia a north-western Greek dialect. The inscription from Pella published in 1995, which is the single epichoric monument of Macedonian, seems to verify positively such an assumption, cf. the use of characteristic Dorisms, along with some 'local' features.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of epigraphical or literary evidence, we must rely on transmitted glosses, quoted in ancient Greek lexica, as the only sort of testimony of the vernacular speech of this region. The proposed research programme consists of the first systematic study of the lexical material ascribed to the Ancient Macedonian, concentrating on the secondary evidence about Ancient Balkan languages provided by the Greek lexicographers and scholiasts.

The project therefore aims at two main goals:

- a) to advance in the reconstruction and understanding of the Macedonian language, enriching the lexicon and grammar thanks to the systematic study of the secondary evidence, as preserved in the Ancient Greek lexica; placing it within the framework of the Indo-European language family and reconstructed IE grammar; and to understand, if possible, its dynamics (external contacts with other languages of the area)
- b) to put the fragmentary attested Macedonian within the framework of the postulated Balkan dialectal area of the Indo-European family; try to see whether one could find postulated features in the preserved material; then to answer the question what the relationship of the Macedonian speech to the Greek dialects and their various developments from so called Proto-Greek period

Such formulated goals may be interconnected by a series of research questions, namely: how can we reconstruct the fragmentary attested languages? What can the secondary evidence preserved in mostly Ancient Greek sources (glosses, scholia) tell us about the languages and cultures on the fringes of the Ancient Greek world? Are the modern theories of subgrouping the Indo-European languages helpful? Are the features postulated for the Balkan areal to be found in Macedonian (and other relic languages of the area?)

The project offers an innovative approach to the problem: gathered data will be analysed and interpreted with reference to the theory of Balkan-Indo-European dialectal area, a common stage in the prehistory of Greek, Phrygian, Armenian, Albanian and other, 'fragmentary attested' languages of the region, such as Thracian or Macedonian, and they will be interpreted within the frames of the Greek lexicographical tradition as well. The main problem, however, will be to see if, and to what extent, attested glosses could contribute to our understanding of the complex linguistic situation in the Balkans, the regions which remained during Antiquity on the fringes of Greek culture and the Greek dialectal area. The project will make innovative and groundbreaking advances in understanding the nature of the Macedonian idiom by using multiple tools to interpret transmitted material. The basic concept of this research is a systematic study, which analyses attested forms from 3 different perspectives: dialectology; etymology and the history of words (including their possible stylistic use in various levels of the language); and the history of text transmission. Such a complex approach combines various analytical tools and methods, which will create a novel approach within this project. The other innovative aspect will be to move the perspective from canonical sources to the secondary documentation of the dialectal lexicon. The novelty of the proposed research lies also in the material chosen, which are the glosses themselves. This project seeks to develop new approaches to historical-linguistic research of the fragmentary languages by developing comparative and interdisciplinary modes of investigation: the complex approach relies on engaging with the historical-comparative method and the method of the internal reconstruction put into a wider background of philological methods. This will result in a form of the lexicon, where each form undergoes linguistic and philological commentary and theoretical studies that summarize the outputs of investigations.