

## Book Review

### A challenge to Bulgarian geologists (Strashimirov, S., Alexiev, B. 1988. *English-Bulgarian Dictionary of Geology*. Ministry of Culture, Science and Education, Sofia; 314 p.)

In 1987, this journal reviewed (Vuchev, V. 1987. New tool for educational and professional support of Bulgarian geologists. — *Geologica Balc.*, 17, 1; 93-94) a pioneer work, the first English-Bulgarian Dictionary of Geology. Its authors have not lost much time and, after a little more than two years, we have the second edition enlarged by about ten per cent to include over 13000 entries from all fields of geology with 33 references against 29 in the first edition. Thus, the authors have demonstrated they are not going to discontinue their valuable work but mean to improve it. There has been no improvement, however, in print and circulation. As before it is a very modest edition, with less than 400 offset copies being sold in a single bookshop, that of the Higher Institute of Mining and Geology. Poor printing and very limited distribution have most likely been responsible for the scant reaction to such a valuable contribution so far.

Besides a general revision and introduction of new material, the second edition specifies usage by referring it to specific fields of geology. This is a major improvement though it might escape the notice of the superficial user who may find the Dictionary a mere list of Bulgarian words against a similar list of English ones. A more careful inspection, however, reveals an impressive amount of competent work done. It ranges from transcriptions of English names (e.g. of minerals, or stratigraphic and other units) into correct Bulgarian words following rules recommended by linguists, to the selection of Bulgarian equivalents of English terms. Again, the untrained eye may pass this over as a minor problem, yet it actually is a formidable task for a bilingual dictionary of this size where by definition the terms are devoid of any context. Careful selection and bracketed references to specific fields of geology are the only means available for pinpointing usage. On the whole, the Dictionary succeeds in giving adequate if not exhaustive interpretations of English terms, and this reviewer has not found misinterpretations. Thus, it is a basically sound, reliable book capable of meeting the needs of the general reader and the student, as intended. Users, however, are obviously expected to have some training in geology and one can easily imagine a layman or a scientist in some other field being unable to choose between seemingly synonymous terms.

One can certainly find a number of shortcomings which occasionally make the Dictionary somewhat inferior even to T. A. Sofiano's English-Russian Geological Dictionary of 1961 (edited, significantly, by a board of ten experts headed by none other than Academician D. S. Korzhinsky). Yet, I refuse to adopt the attitude of an idle critical bystander and would rather discuss constructive future measures. Before that, however, I should like to express my general opinion of the Dictionary as an inspired effort with impressive results the whole credit for which goes to the authors at the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Higher Institute of Mining and Geology, Sofia, and to the editors and consultants involved. It should be noted that in the last two or three years that Chair has also published an English-Bulgarian and a Bulgarian-English Dictionary of Mining which is a great achievement especially when compared with the general scarcity of scientific and technological dictionaries in this country.

Now, if we are to discuss the future of this and other Bulgarian geological dictionaries, the one reviewed here makes it abundantly clear that it is the Bulgarian vocabulary which can be greatly improved upon. Even if the authors should try to enlarge their dictionary to the 36000 entries in current geological glossaries in English, as perhaps they plan to do, they would very soon reach the natural limitations imposed by the absence of a comprehensive yet concise code of Bulgarian terms. Thus, if we are to bridge effectively the already appreciable communication gap between Bulgarian and other languages, we should have a Bulgarian glossary of geology against which to check foreign vocabulary. There is no need, I think, of arguing here the merits of such a book, its power in organizing terminology. It will put terms into context, correlate or discriminate between Bulgarian and other classification schemes and nomenclature, will sift the widely agreed upon from the debatable, etc. For a discussion of glossaries I would refer the reader to Ian Campbell's superb Foreword to the first edition of *Glossary of Geology* (Gary, M., McAfee, J. R., Wolf, C. L. (Eds.). 1973. Washington D. C.). In Bulgaria in particular, such a glossary, combined with bilingual dictionaries, will perhaps reduce the reluctance of professional linguists to tackle geological vocabulary and may attract new people to the scanty group of much needed translators, a strategy in which this journal ought to be greatly interested.

In conclusion, this dictionary, highly recommended for general use, may be regarded as an invitation and even a challenge to the Bulgarian geological community to organize its scattered efforts and to put in order the geological vocabulary in its native tongue.

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