

Semi-automatic Multilevel Annotation of Vagueness in Historical Texts

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HerCoRe – Hermeneutic and Computer based Analysis of Reliability, Consistency and Vagueness in historical texts

- Illustrated through two main works of Dimitrie Cantemir-



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„Mixed Methods in Humanities“

Combine hermeneutic approaches and methods from computer science for investigating reliability and consistency of original text from 18th century as well as their translations

H

Compare for the first time “original” with translations done in the 18th- 19th century

(In)Validate assumptions about source quotations in original text

CS

Demonstrate how to include vagueness and imprecision in annotations and interpretations engines

Progress work in automatic recognition of vague expressions

Methods in Computer Science

- Reasoning on vague information
- Semantic Database technology
- Multilingual natural language processing

Methods in Humanities (hermeneutics)

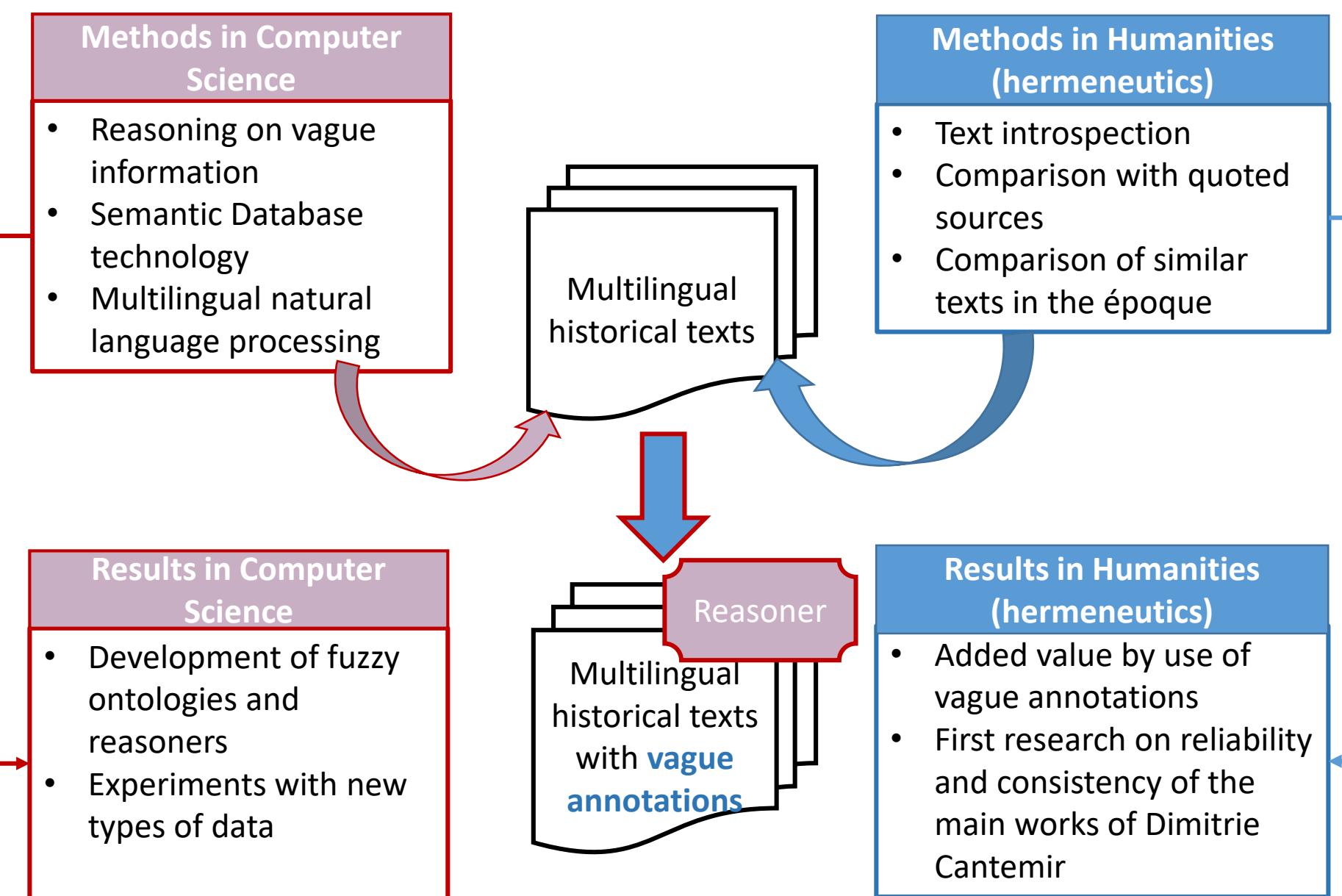
- Text introspection
- Comparison with quoted sources
- Comparison of similar texts in the époque

Results in Computer Science

- Development of fuzzy ontologies and reasoners
- Experiments with new types of data

Results in Humanities (hermeneutics)

- Added value by use of vague annotations
- First research on reliability and consistency of the main works of Dimitrie Cantemir





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Turcology



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CL, CS

Outline

- Rationale of the project
- Corpus' Insight
- Identifying and annotating vagueness /uncertainty
- Technological approach

Dimitrie Cantemir (1673 -1723)

- Prince of Moldavia (historical province) as well as „universal“ humanist (linguist, ethnographer, musicologist, historian, writer)
- As member of the Royal Academy in Berlin and at the request of this institution wrote two works :
 - Description of his own country („*Descriptio Moldaviae*“)
 - History of ottoman empire (History of Growth and Decay of Ottoman Empire)
- Original material written in Latin; Both originals were lost already by the end of 18th century
- Several copies were used as basis for translations into German, English (Tindal), French, Russian and later in Romanian
- Sometimes the translation relies on other translation (e.g. first Romanian translation of “*Descriptio Moldaviae*” was done after the German version from 1774.



These translations used as reference information about the Ottoman Empire and Romanian provinces until the middle of 19th century, i.e. they give an idea about the reception about this part of the world in Western Europe.

Analysis and interpretation of Cantemir's works

- Already in the 1920'ies, it was demonstrated using selections of texts, that the translations are not respecting the original all the time
 - E.g. Information sources indicated by Cantemir were omitted, because they seemed too unreliable to the translator
- In the XX century researchers claimed that some of the sources, persons and facts quoted by Cantemir were not existing (e.g. Babinger).
- BUT given the:
 - Geographic distribution of material (originals in libraries in USA and Russia; translations and copies across Europe; most part of the quoted sources in Turkey),
 - The multilingual character of the materials to be investigated (Latin, German, Romanian, English, Turkish at least) and
 - The volume of data which has to be processed in parallel

no study about the reliability and consistency of the original and the translations could be performed until now

Directions of investigation

- **Reliability:**

- Of the original: are the quotations made by Cantemir grounded? Is there a concordance between his degree of trust in these sources and the current knowledge about them (e.g. is there any evidence that a person which Cantemir claims to have spoken to, really lived in that time?)
- Of the translation against the original; Here an important role have the inserted editorial annotations.

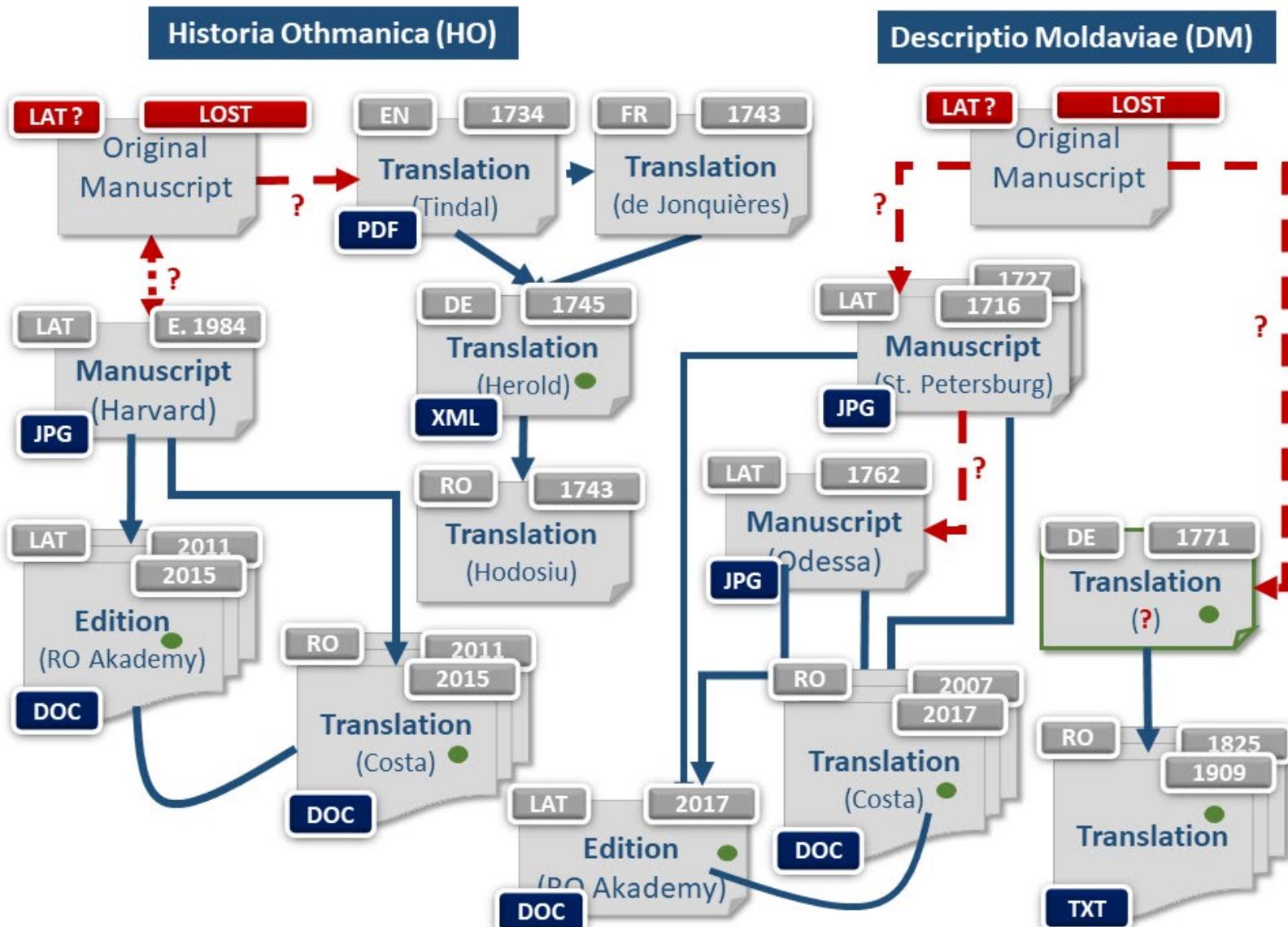
- **Consistency:**

- Within the original: keeps Cantemir a constant opinion about persons, events, facts across the text? (see his own annex with annotations vs. the text)
- Across the 2 “originals”: Are common persons and events described similarly?
- Between original and translation: does the translation preserve the degree of vagueness /certainty stated by Cantemir?

- **Vagueness**

- Political or tactical reasons for imprecise expressions

Manuscripts, editions, translations- unclear tradition



Corpus creation – challenges

- Surface form – level
 - German texts are in black-letter typeface

Rechtschreibung, Schreibweisen

Higher error rate in OCR (even on relatively homogenous pages up to 25%)

- Mixed typefaces
- Mixed scripts

Der zweyte Medelnitschiar.
 Der zweyte Blutschiar.
 Der zweyte Suldtschiar.
 Der zweyte Zitnitschiar.
 Der zweyte Pitar.

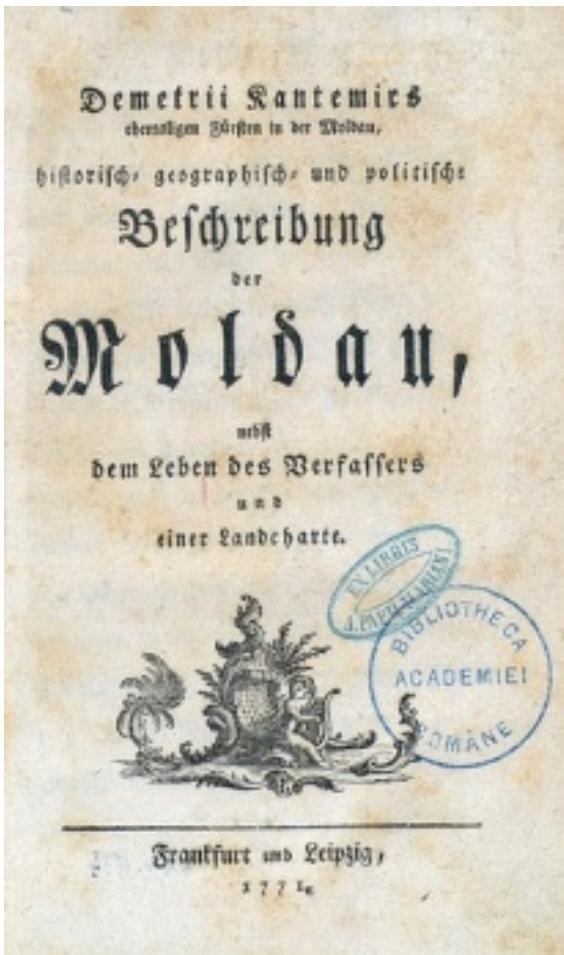
07.09.2018

DHISheffield 2018 - C. Vertan

Serpens, Kynele, canis &c. Im pluriū seien sie hinten an die Wörter, die eine lebendige Sache bedeuten, den Artikel *ij*; als: *Caij, Oamenij, equi, homines*: leblose Kreaturen aber endigen sich im Pluriū auf *ele*, als *Scaunele, Vassele*, s. f. w. Auch haben die Moldauer zween Articulos foemini generis, *e* und *a*, als: *mujere, gaina, mulier, gallina*. Wörter, die sich auf *e* endigen, haben im Pluriū *ile*, als: *mujere, mujerile*, die sich aber auf *a*

dauer mit den Genuesern während ihres Besitzes der Küsten des schwarzen Meers hatten, sich in unsere Sprache mit eingeschlichen haben.

Denn auf gleiche Weise haben die Moldauer, nachdem sie mit den Griechen, Türken und Pohlen zu handeln anfiengen, auch Wörter aus der Sprache dieser Völker in die ihrige aufgenommen; zum Exempel, von den Griechen *Pedepsa*, παιδευος, *Kivernisjre*, κιβερνος, *Procopie*, προκοπη, *Blasterin*, βλαστην, *azyma*, αζυμον, *Drum*, Δρόμος, *Pizma*, πιζμα. Da wir nun also beider Parthenen Meinungen vorgetragen haben, so getrauen wir uns nicht zu bestimmen, welche von beyden der Wahrheit am nächsten sey? aus Furcht,



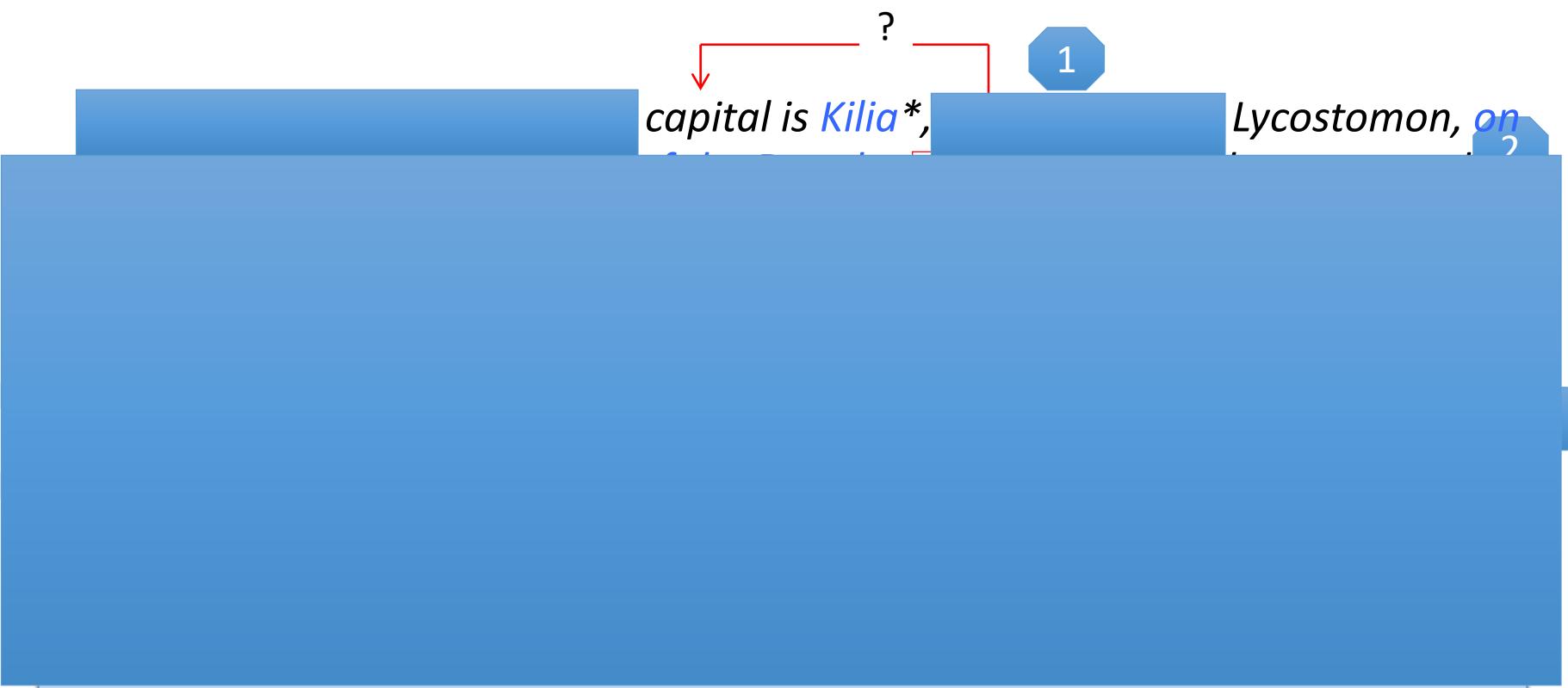
„Nu îndrăznim să spunem ce e adevărat și ce e fals într-o asemenea întunecime a istoriei.“

(Dimitrie Cantemir, Descrierea stării Moldaviei in vechime si azi, traducere Ioan Costa 2017)

„I do not dare to decide what is the truth about this matter, given the high darkness of this story“

A Complicated Explicit Example: Ambiguity

(Cantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviæ*, p.73 transl.)



Domnul cel dintâi carele după năvălirea lui Batie, a agonisit iarăși strălucirea sea mai dinainte a Moldovei a fost:

1. Dragoș și măcar că hronografi oastre nu arată pentru știință neamului său, dar ia noi se zice necontentit, că **a fost** din neamul cel vechiu al crailor Moldovinești, și a avut tată pe Bogdan fiul lui Ioan, dela carele toți Domnii obișnuesc a-și pune la iscălitură numele său.

was

Dragos = belongs_to Moldavian kings
 Dragos = son_of Bogdan
 Bogdan = son_of Johannis
 Dragos = has_additional_name Johannis
 Bogdan = has_additional_name Johannis
 meargă lă vanat, carele a dat prilej lă descoperirea Moldovei și ar fi putut îndemna pe ceilalți patrioți ai săi, ca să vie după dânsul.

Der erste demnach, der nach Batia Einfall (*) der Moldau ihren vorigen Glanz wieder verschafft hat, war

1. Dragosch. Obgleich unsre Jahrbücher sein Geschlechtsregister nicht angeben, doch eine beständige Sage bey uns aus dem alten königlichen moldauischen Stamme **gewesen sey**, und den Bogdan zum Vater gehabt habe, welcher ein Sohn des Johannis war, von welchem alle Fürsten den

Dragosch ≈ belongs_to Moldavian kings
 Dragosch = son_of Bogdan
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 Dragosch = has_additional_name Johannis
 Bogdan = has_additional_name Johannis

die Jagd (welche die Moldau zu entdecken Gelegenheit gegeben,) habe ausgehen, und seine übrigen Landsleute überreden können, ihn zu folgen.

should have been

Although our books do not record his descendants, it is a wellknown legend for us that he is coming from the moldavian kings

1. Dragosch. *Obgleich unsre Jahrbücher sein*

Geschlechtsregister nicht angeben, so ist es doch eine beständige Sage bey uns, daß er aus dem alten königlichen moldauischen Stamme gewesen sey, und den Bogdan zum Vater gehabt habe, welcher ein Sohn des Johannis war, von welchem alle Fürsten den Namen Johannis in ihrem Titel zu führen pflegen; dieser Meinung ist desto mehr Glauben beyzumessen, weil man schwerlich glauben kan, daß einer von gemeiner Herkunft mit einem so Gefolge auf die Jagd (welche die Moldau Gelegenheit gegeben,),

One should trust even more this opinion,
as one can hard think that....

schon vermutet hatten, daß Dragosch erst nach des Tatars Bathy oder Batu Einfall, d.i. ungefähr nach 1250. aus Siebenbürgen ausgewandert ist; vielleicht aber lassen sich beide Meynungen vereinigen wenn man zwey Auswanderungen annimmt, die eine in der letzten Hälfte des Zwölften, die andere in der ersten Hälfte des dreizehenten Jahrhundert (V.)

Enriched Classical Markup

Dragosch	\approx belongs	moldavian kings
Dragosch	\approx son_of	Bogdan
Bogdan	\approx son_of	Johannis
Dragosch	\approx has_additional_name	Johannis
Bogdan	\approx has_additional_name	Johannis
Drgaosch	discovered	Moldau
Dragosch	has_acitivity	hunting
Dragosch	has_activity	development
	Development takes_place	after Batia invasion

Dragosch	has_activity	moved
Movement	takes_place	$>=1150; <=1200$
Movement	takes_place	$>=1200; <=1250$
Bathy invasion	takes_place	≈ 1250
Bathy	has_alternative_name	Batu
Bathy	is_a	Tatar

Sources /levels of vagueness to be annotated

1. Linguistic markers for vagueness

2. Factual uncertainty

- 2.1 References to external written materials (publications)
- 2.2 References to external persons, places, names
- 2.3 References to events
- 2.4. References to other external knowledge (e.g. legends, folk beliefs)

3. Editors

3.1. Editorial marks

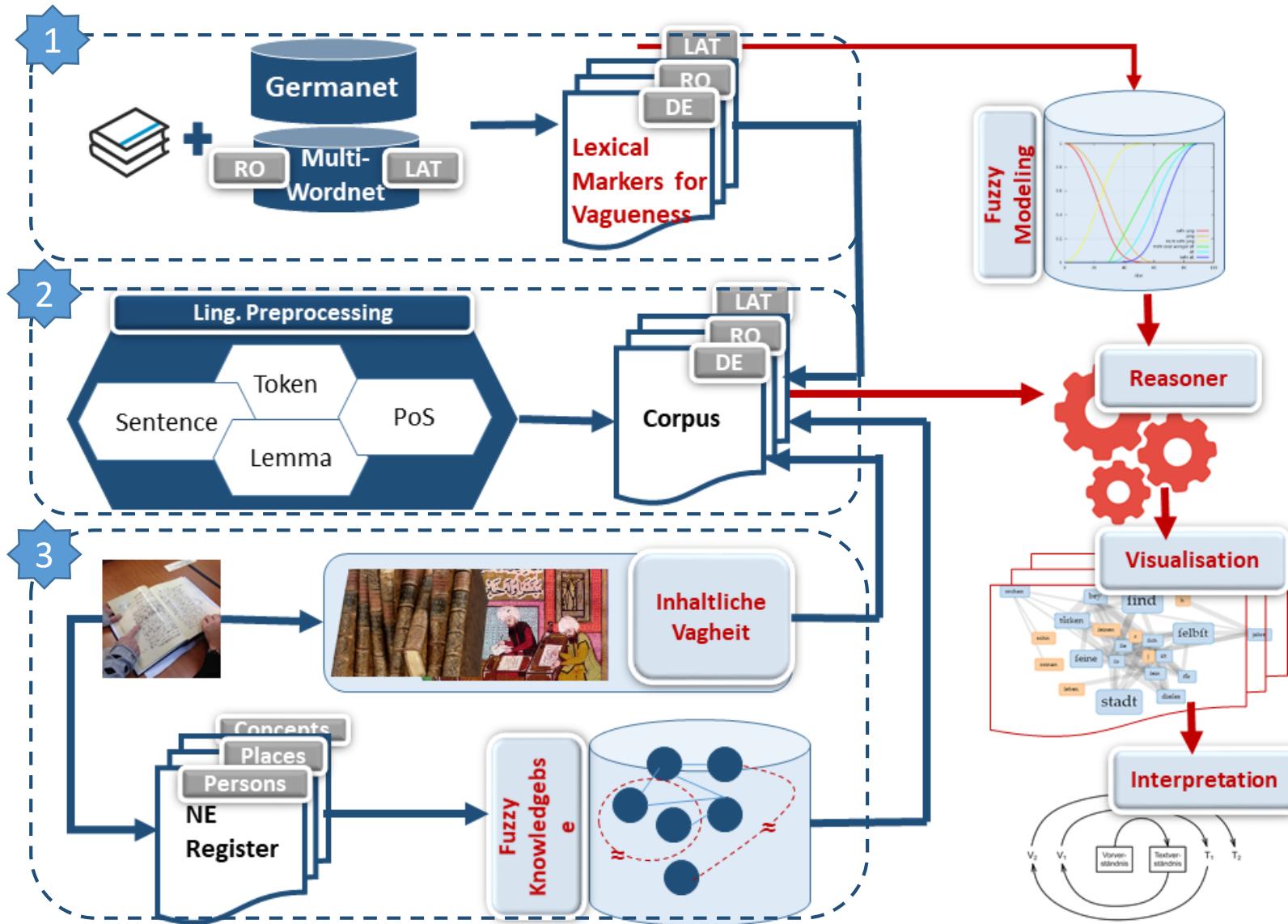
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- < > correction
- [] deletion
- { } marginals /between line

3.2 „Footnotes“

4. Metadata

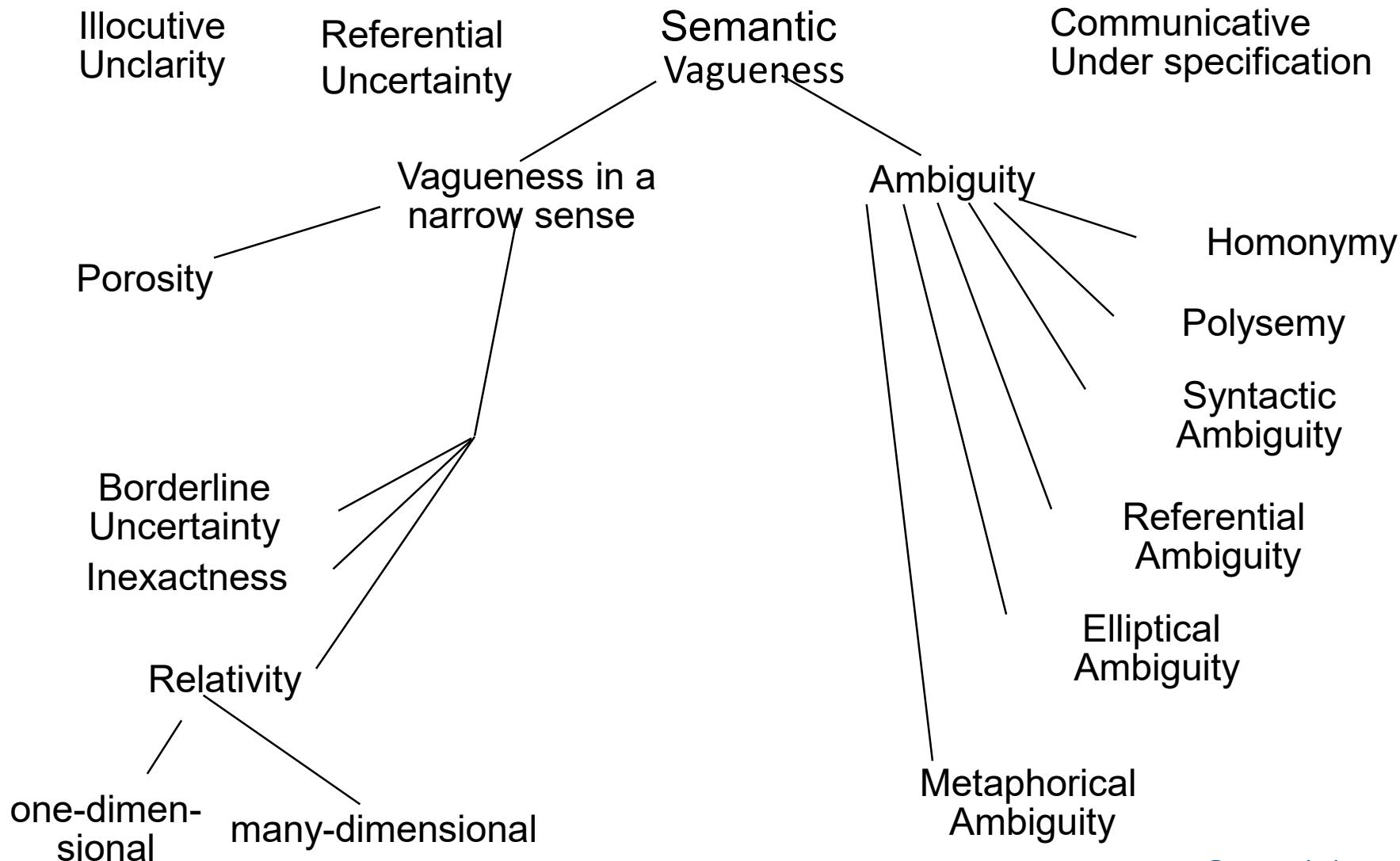
- 4.1 genre
- 4.2. author
- 4.3 translation
- 4.4. tradition path

Vagueness annotation is useful only if it is accompanied by inference rules and adequate ontological knowledge-base



M.Pinkal's Schema of Semantic Vagueness

1



Quotation

Lexical and Syntactic Sources of vagueness

Hactenus Gregoras: ad cuius verba observare haud extra propositum erit τὴν πρώτην, quam Gregoras vocat „Tartaria” esse, quam hodie vulgo „Mare” sive eiusque incolarum nomina, in istoricis recenseantur, tamen adscita magis, aut ab exteris indita, quam propria eisque, dum in suis sedibus manentes peculiaria fuisse. Ita, si quis ἀπό τοις ὁμοίωσιν Praefatione legerit Ογζεντζίζ, principes in duas stirpes fuisse divisos, „Aliothman” unam, et „Ali Dzengiz”¹ alteram, non videtur sub ipsis horum generum condidisse. Seemingly unlikely, the appellationem iam apud Suleimano parentes ab huius neamurii integro post saeculo iis imperabat, fuisse sortitos; ita non minus falso vulgo praedicantur Tartarorum Crimensium Principes ab ipso Dzengizchano „Alidzengiz” appellationem retinuisse.

More plausible

Would have been...

seems unlikely

equally false

- Până aici l-am citat pe Gregoras: față de cuvintele lui nu va fi nepotrivit să observăm că acea Tartaria „ή πρώτη”, pe care o numește Gregoras, este chiar aceea pe care o numim îndeobște cea „Mare”, iar numele locuitorilor ei, chiar dacă sunt înregistrate de istorici, au fost totuși mai degrabă împrumutate sau date de străini decât proprii lor, purtate întocmai pe vremea când se aflau în sălașurile lor. Astfel, dacă va fi citit cineva în Prefața pusă înaintea acestui tratat că principii neamului oguzilor au fost împărțiti în două stirpe, una „aliothmană”, cealaltă, „alidzengiză”, să nu creadă că denumirea aceasta era de-acum valabilă pentru întemeietorii acestor neamuri. Căci, după cum pare nepotrivit ca aliothmanizii care i se supun lui Suleiman să-și fi ales numele de la nepotul acestuia, care a domnit peste ei după un secol întreg, la fel de fals se spune îndeobște că principii tartarilor din Crimea și-ar fi păstrat denumirea „alidzengiz” chiar de la Dzengizchan

Selected markers for linguistic vagueness

1. comparatives, inexact adjectives e.g. "mehr/more" "größer/bigger", "älter/older"
2. non-intersectives e.g. „vermeintlich/supposed“, „so-genannt/so-called“
3. Hedges e.g. „ziemlich/quite“, „einigermaßen/approximately“ „etwa/about“
4. inexact measures „4 Tagereisen/4 days trip“, 10 Fuß /10 feet“
5. modals (attitudes) e.g. „vielleicht/maybe“, „hoffentlich/hopefully“; subjunctives verbs
6. lexical quotation markers :“es wurde gesagt /it is said“
7. vague quantifiers e.g. „viele“, „meistens /mostly“
8. complex quantifiers e.g. “etwa die Hälfte von den 20-30 tausend Soldaten / about a half from the 20-30 thousands soldiers”
9. numbers
10. range expressions e.g. “Anfang des 18. Jhds./begin of 18th century”
11. unclear place „Syrfia“, „Moramor“
12. unclear person e.g. „der ehemaligen Herzog / the former duke“
13. unclear time e.g. „in alten Zeiten /in old times“
14. Domain specific e.g. „Wesir/vizier“ vs. „Wesire/viziers“

Historians and Sources Mentioned by Cantemir

- Giovanni Battista Riccioli (on Muslim calendar)
- Franciscus a Mesgnien Meninski (1598-1671), *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium, Turcicæ, Arabicæ, Persicæ* (1680)
- Philipp Lonicerus (1532-1599), *Chronicorum Turcicorum* (1584)
- Hoca Saadeddin Efendi (1536/7-1599), *Tac üt-Tevarih* (1520?)
- Solakzade Mehmet Hemdemi Efendi (1590-1657), *Tarih-i Solakzade* (1660?)
- Mehmed Neşrî (Hüseyin bin Eyne Bey?) (?-1520), *Kitâb-i Cihannümâ* (1485?)
- İbrahim Peçevî (1572-1650), *Tarih-i Peçevi* (1640?)
- Hezarfen (Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi) (?-1691/92), *Tenkih-i Tevarih-i Mülük* and *Telhisû'l-Beyan fi Kavanin-i Al-i Osman*
- Âşıkpaşazâde Dervîş Ahmet Âşikî (1400-1484), *Tevarih-i Ali-i Osman* (1478?)
- Nicephorus Gregoras (1295-1360), *Roman History* (1359?)
- Kalkondilas Lanikos
- Şeyh Sadi (1210-1292), *Gülistan* (1258)
- Seyyid Nimetullah Efendi (Nakibzâde), *Tuhfe-i Ni'meti* (Persian dictionary) (1637)
- *Lexicon Persicorum Turcicum?*

Manual Annotation of Factual uncertainty

- [...] He fought two Battles with Bajazet Ildirim; in the first he was Victor, and in the second he routed Him with a memorable slaughter, which seven vast piles of *Turkish* Bodies erected after the Battle, **witnessed**, by the Confession of *Hezarfenn* himself, the faithful *Turkish* Historian. Cantemir, pp. 47 (Annotations)

Hezарfen (Hezарfen Hüseyin Efendi) (?-1691/92), Tenkih-i Tevarih-i Mülük: **is NOT mentioning this**

- The Turkish Historians so extoll this Prince's expedition in assembling his troops, in executing his designs, and in vanquishing his enemies, that when they talk of the natural speed of the Tartars in comparison with his wonderful marches, **they call the first, the creeping of a Snail.**

Cantemir, pp. 48 (Anotations)

Described in Solakzade, Hoca Saadettin, Neşri

Manual Annotation of Factual uncertainty

Deutsche Übersetzung 1745

„Was seine Söhne betrifft: so wissen die christlichen Schriftsteller unter den verderbten Namen Erdogul, Issa, Kalepin, Cyricelbis und Cibelin, viele Dinge von denselben zu erzählen. Wenn man aber die Folge der GEschichte und das Zeugniß der turkischen Schriftsteller betrachtet; so siehet man offenbar, daß es bloße Erdichtungen sind. Denn diese legen einstimmig Bajeßid vier Söhne bei: Mustafa, der in der Schlacht mit den Tatarn um das Leben kam, Süleiman, Musa und Muhämmed. [...] So viel ist weniger gewiß, daß nicht mehr als vier Sohne Bajeßids in der ganzen Geschichte vorkommen, darunter aber ist kein Erdogan!“.

(S. 79-80)

It is absolutely sure and all sources tell unanimously that Bajezid had 4 Sons and none of them had the name Erdogan

?

Türkische-Osmanische Quellen

- ◆ **HSE:** **Ertuğrul**, Süleyman, Mehmed, Isa Çelebi, Musa Çelebi, Mustafa Çelebi.
(S. 192)
- ◆ **NES:** **Ertuğrul**, Süleyman, Mehmed, Isa Çelebi, Musa Çelebi, Mustafa Çelebi
(S. 313)
- ◆ **SOL:** **Ertuğrul**, Süleyman, Mehmed, Isa Çelebi, Musa Çelebi, Mustafa Çelebi.
(S. 70)

DHO

LHO

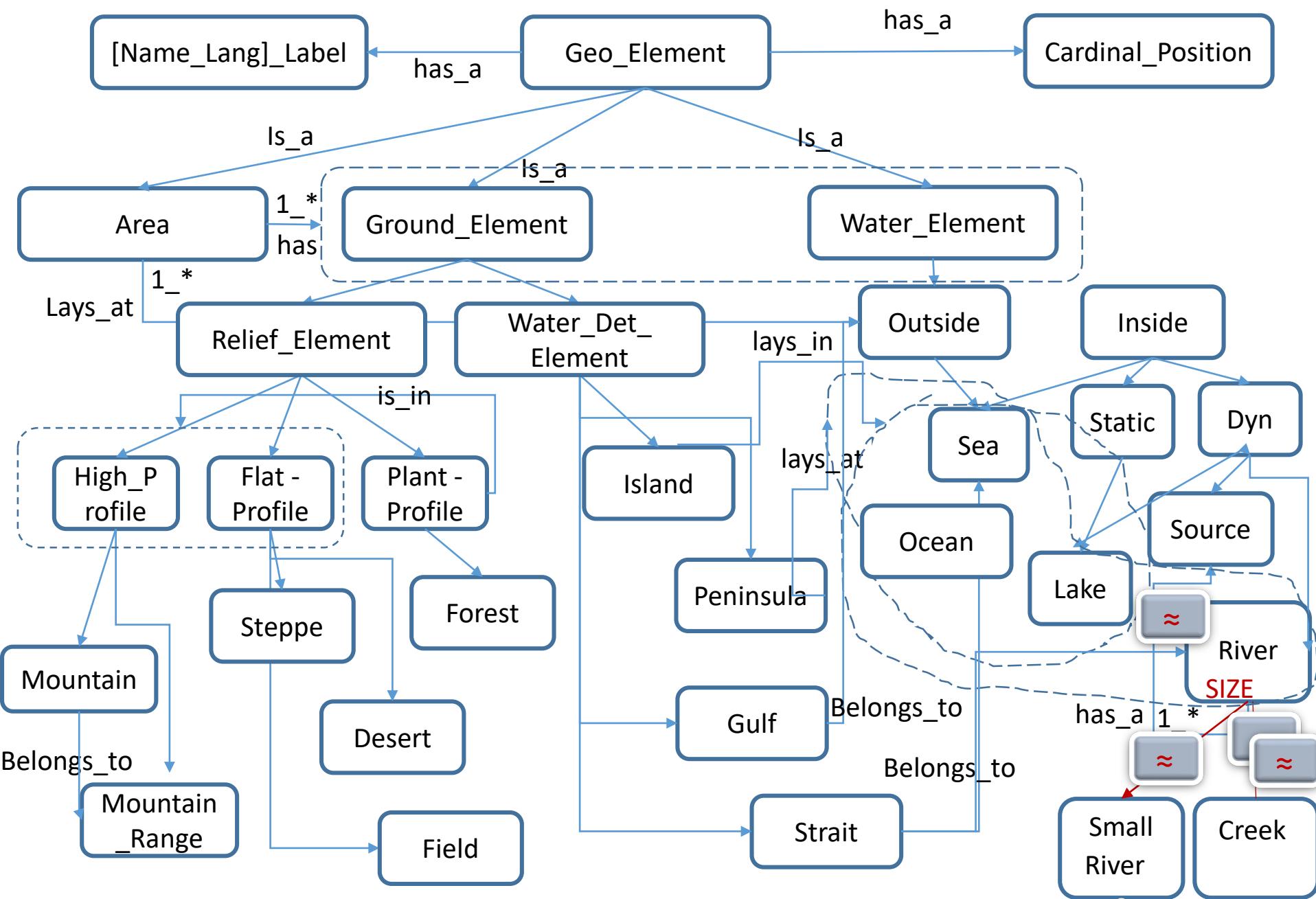
Turkish Sources

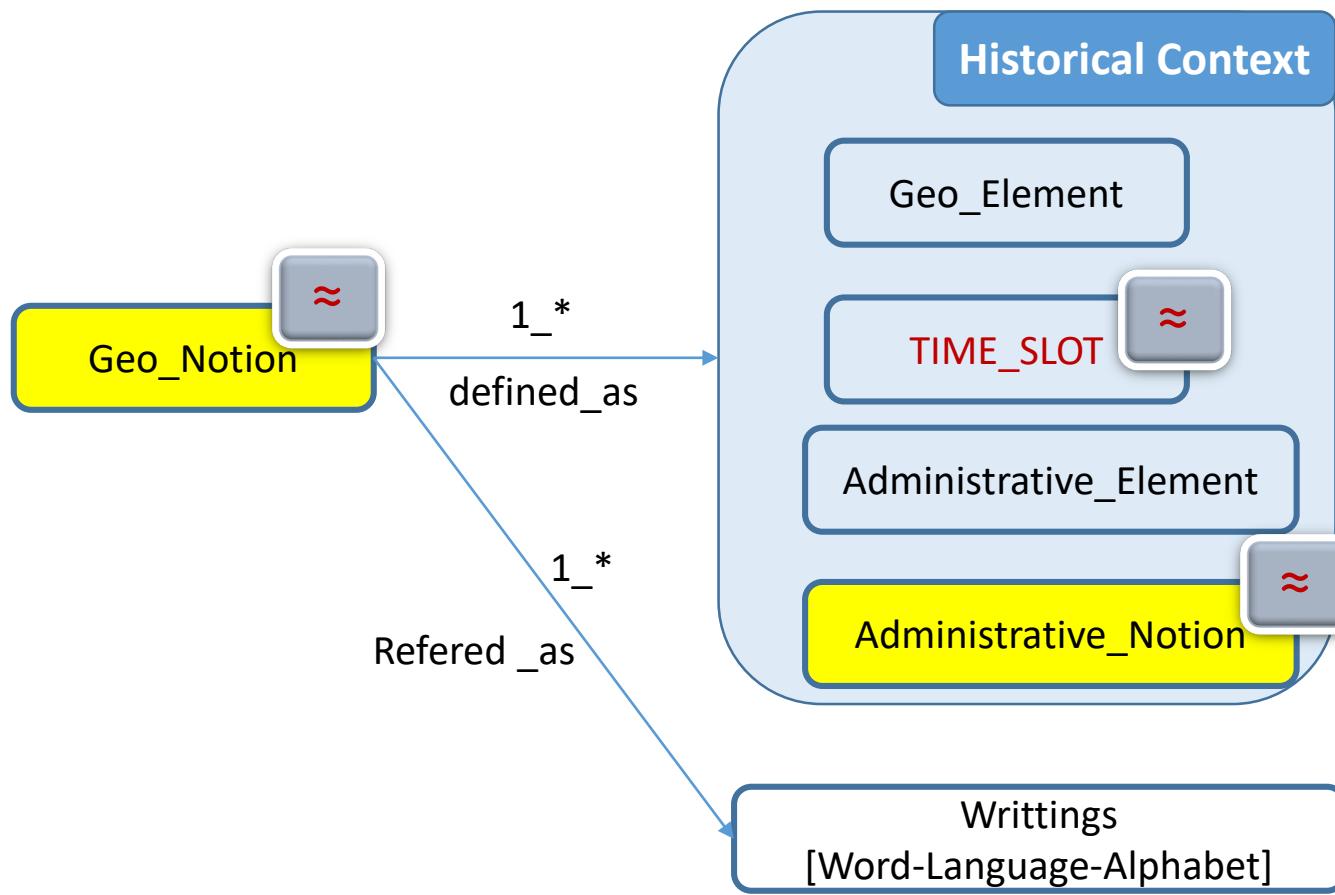
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Istifan	66	Istefan	38	
Matthias·(Ann.)	66	Mathiam·Corvinum	34	
Bajeßid·Yildirim·(Ann.)	66	Ildirim·Baiezida	34	پلدرم بایزید Yıldırım·Bayezid
Heßarfenn·(Ann.)	66	Hezárffenn	34	
Karaman·Ogli	67	Caramanoughly	39	قرامان او غلی Karamanoğlu
Bajeßid	67	Baiezid	39	بایزید Bayezid

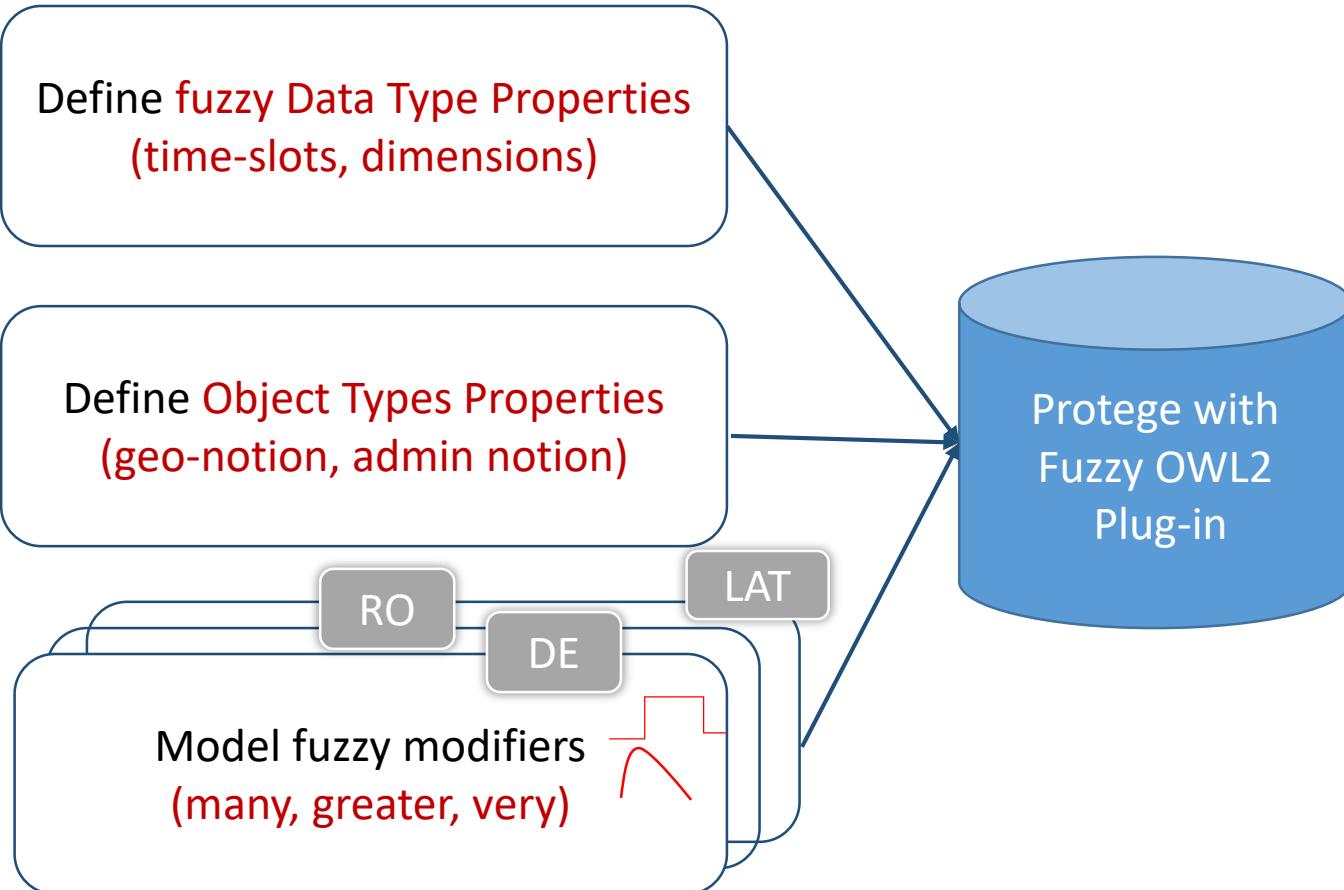
Places Database

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Edrene·(Mewlasi)	73	Edrne·(Molasi)	44	ادرنه·Edirne
Edrene·(Mewlasi)·(Ann.)	73	Ederne·(Mollasi) ادرنه·(مولاسی)		ادرنه·Edirne
Adrianopel·(Ann.)	73	Adrianopolis	38	ادرنے·Edirne
Misr·(Mewlasi)·(Ann.)	73	Mýsr·(Mollasi) مصر·(مولاسی)	38	مصر·Misır
Burusa·(Mewlasi)·(Ann.)	73	Birússa·(Mollasi) بروسه·(مولاسی)	38	بروسه·Bursa
Haleb·(Mewlasi)·(Ann.)	73	Halép·(Mollasi) حلب·(مولاسی)	38	حلب·Haleb/Halep
Dawud·Pascha	74	Daud· Pasza· Davùd· (Ann.)	44, 38· (An n.)	

Persons Database







Example: Annotation of ambiguous places



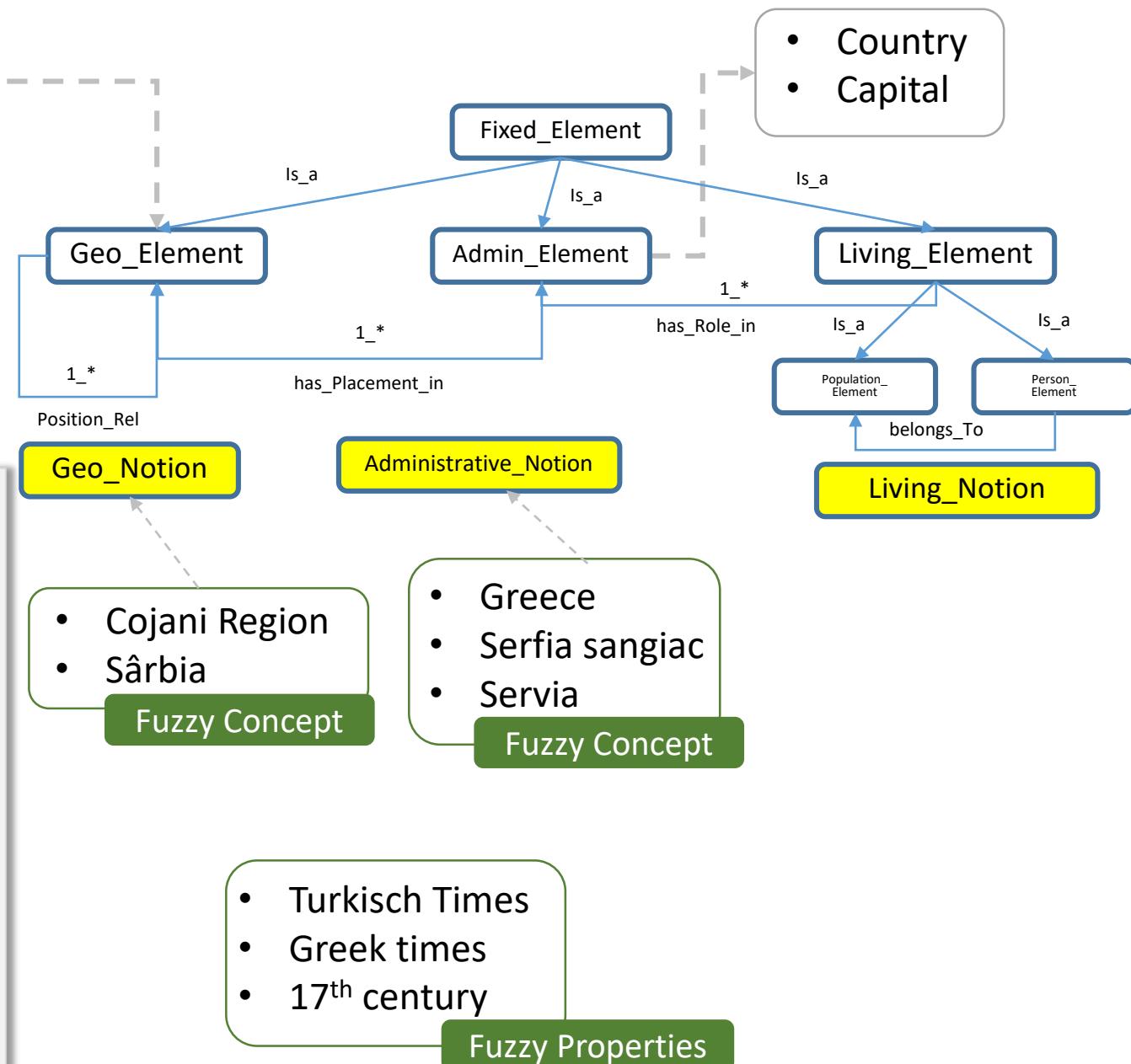
Ortelius
Map 1570

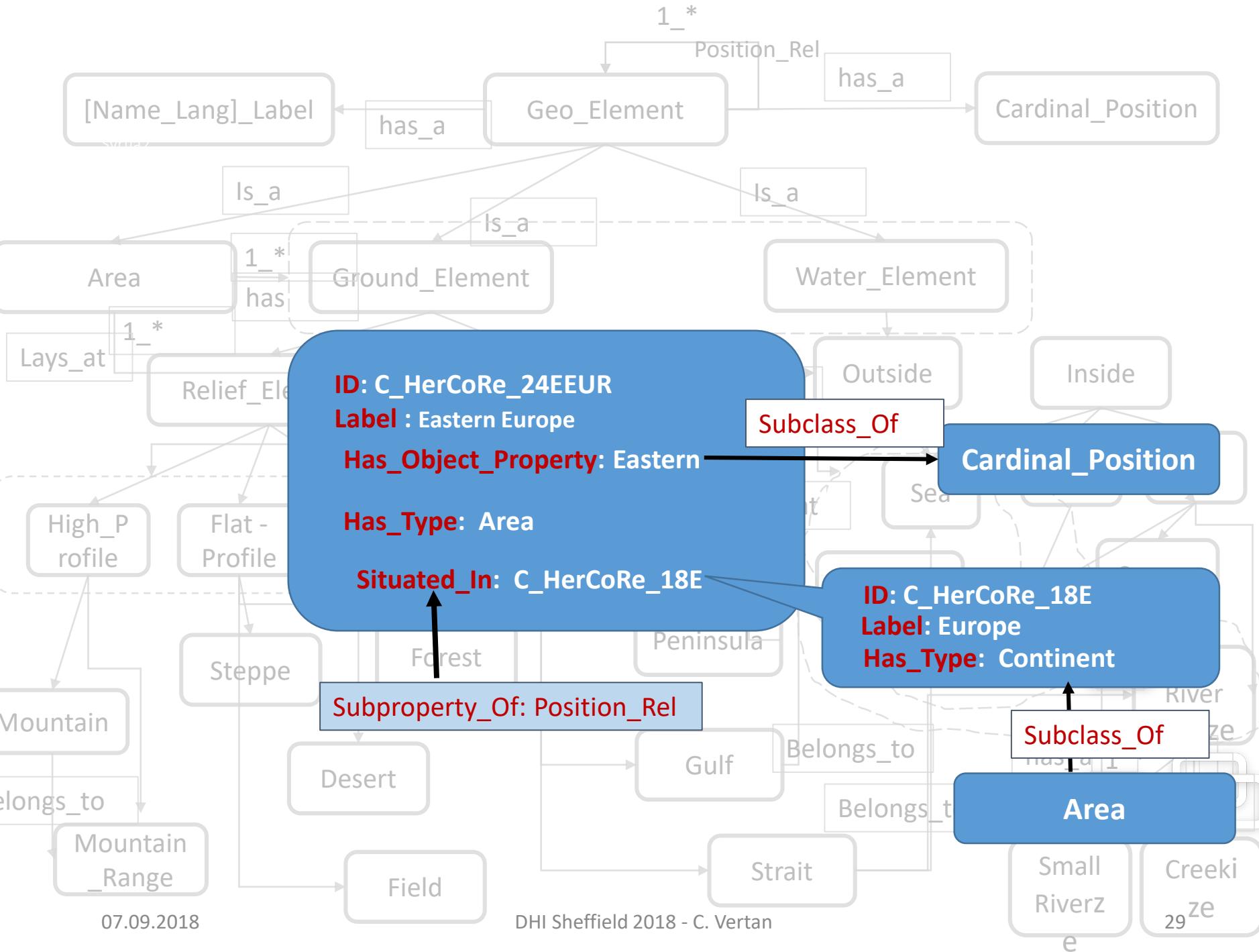
- Northern Dobrudja
- Western Macedonia
- Eastern Europe

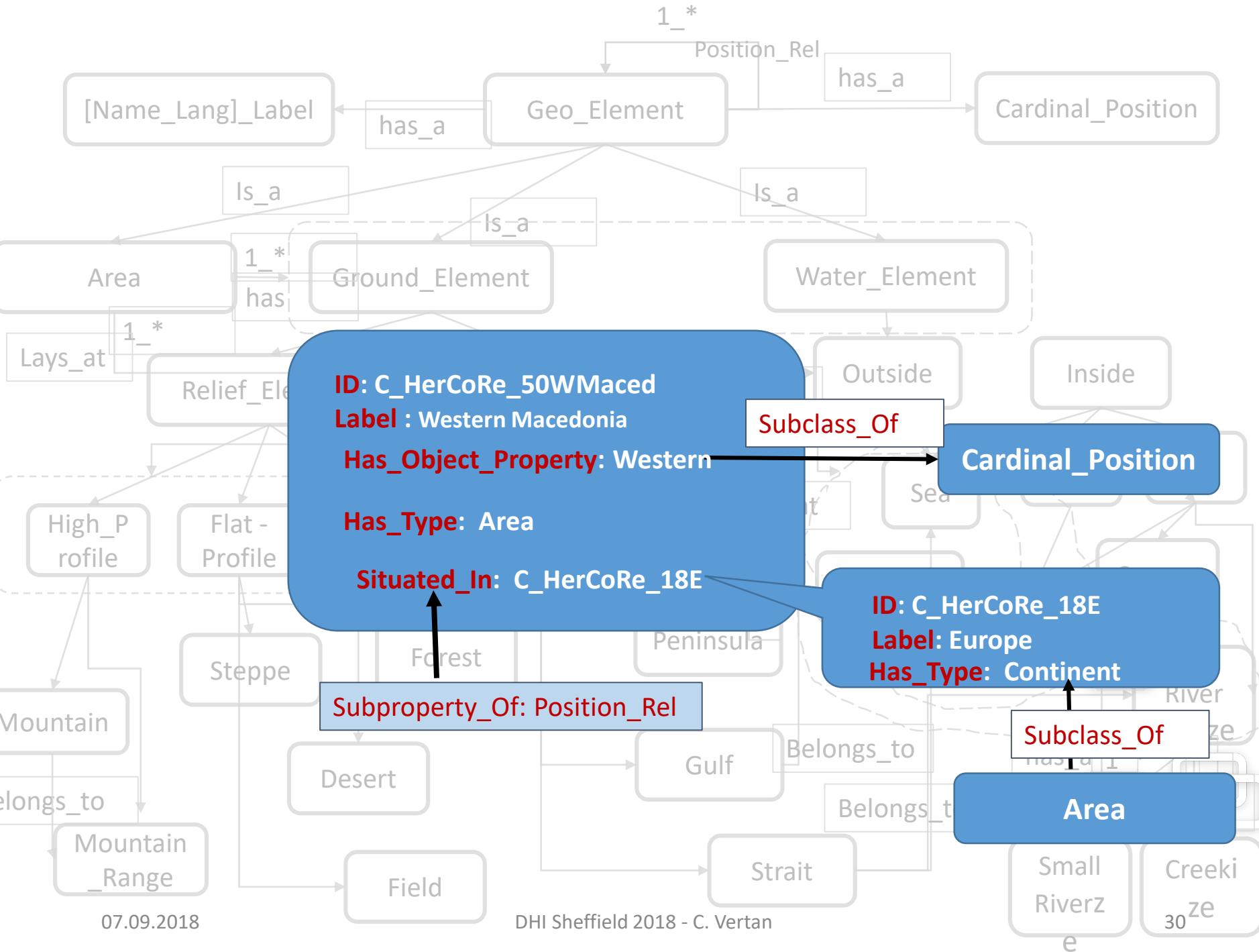
Syrfia is

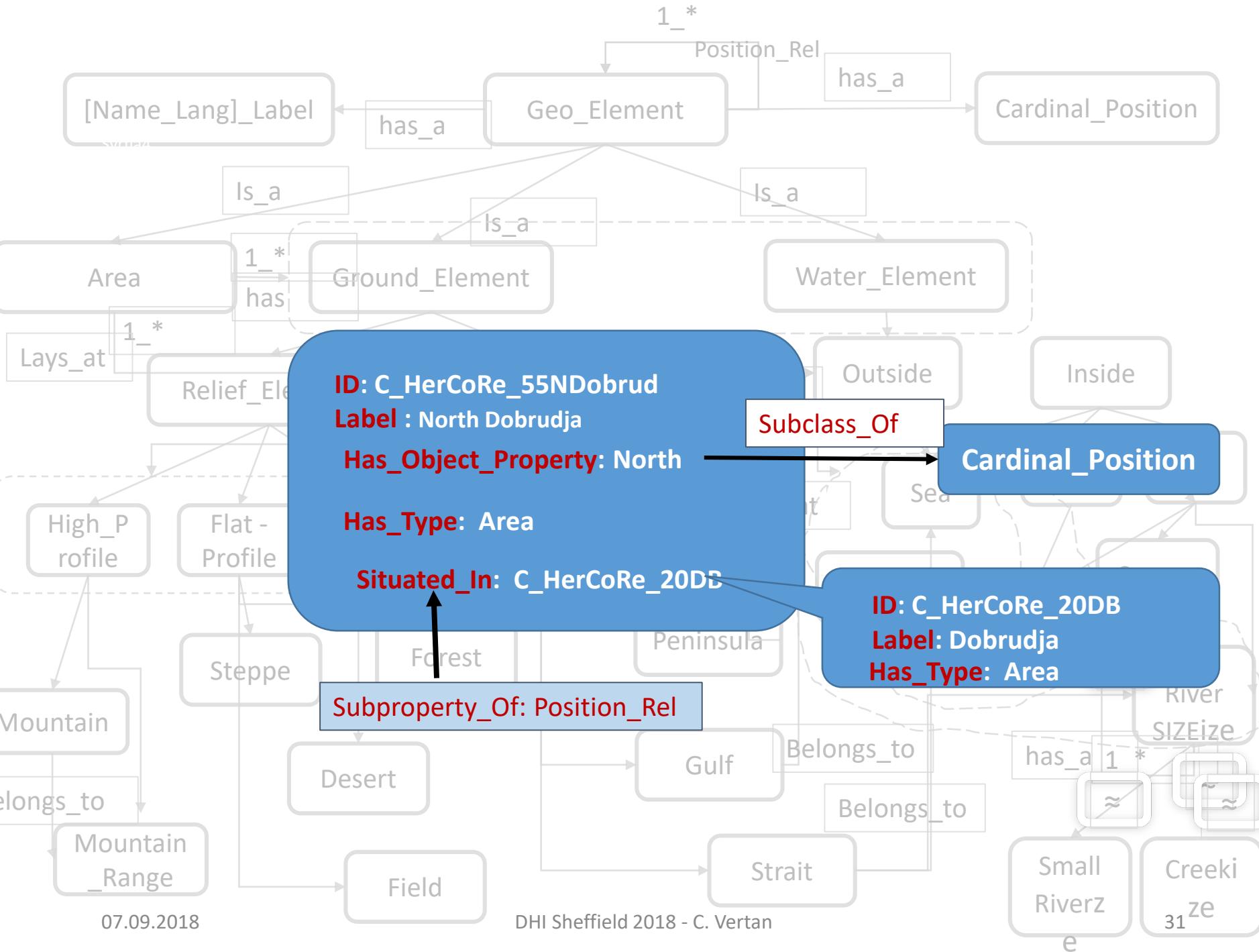
the abandoned name of a region in Eastern Europe, used on historical maps until 17th century, designating

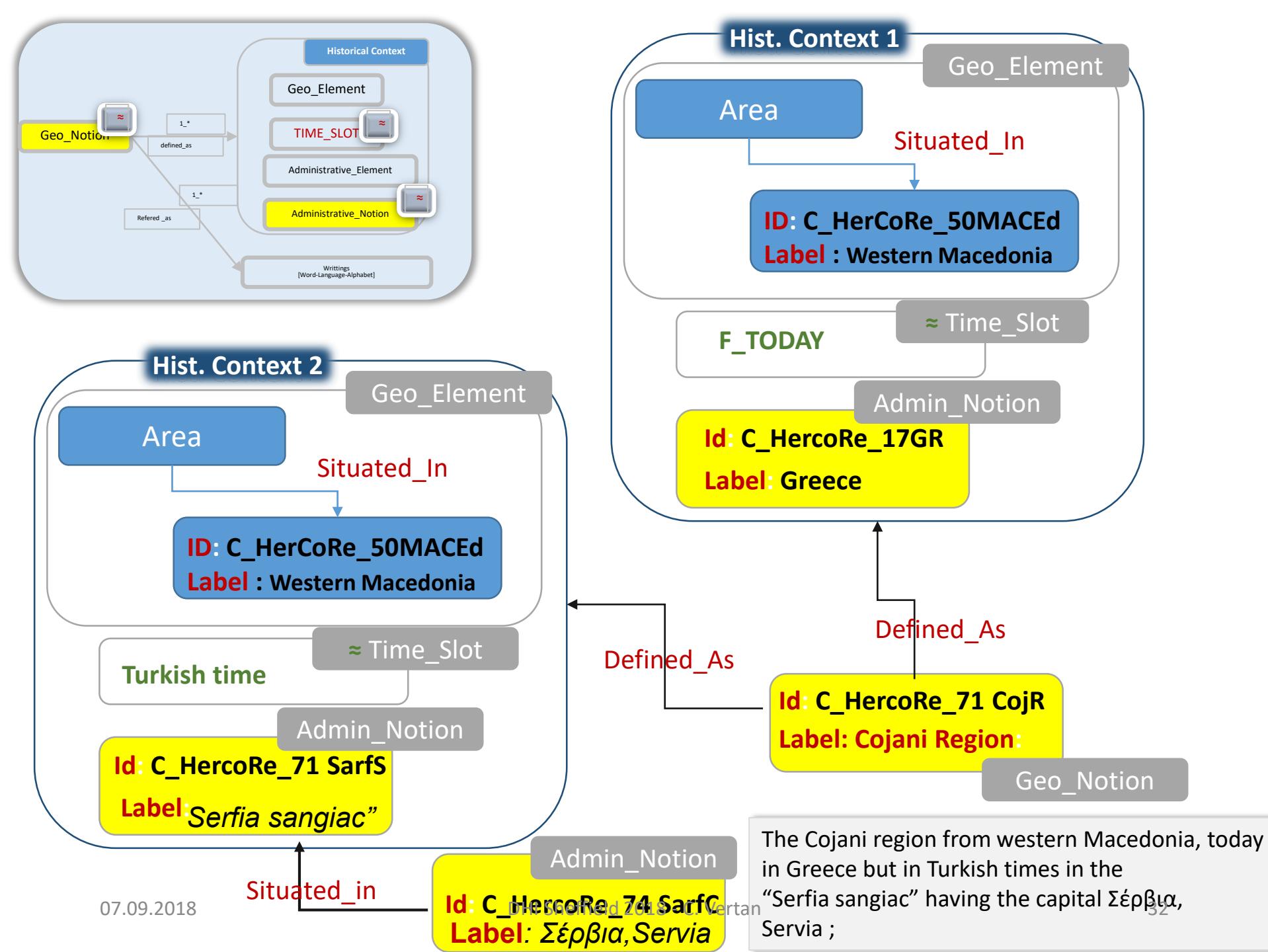
- a part of Northern Dobrudja, coming from the Greek term Σύρφοι - Syrphoi, or
- The Cojani region from western Macedonia, today in Greece but in turkish times in the "Serfia sangiac" having the capital Σέρβια, Servia ;
- Sârbia, due to phonetic association.

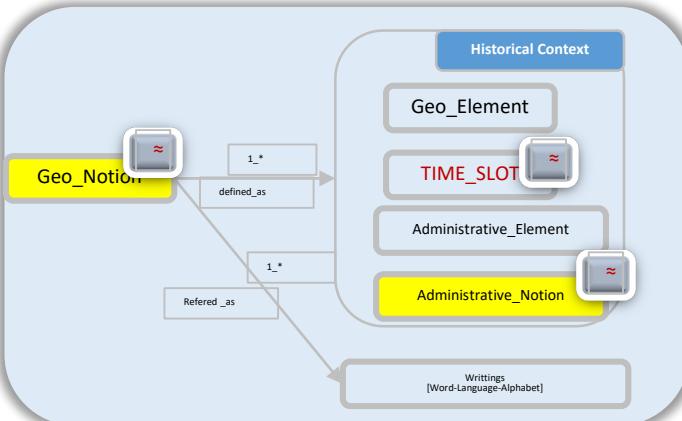










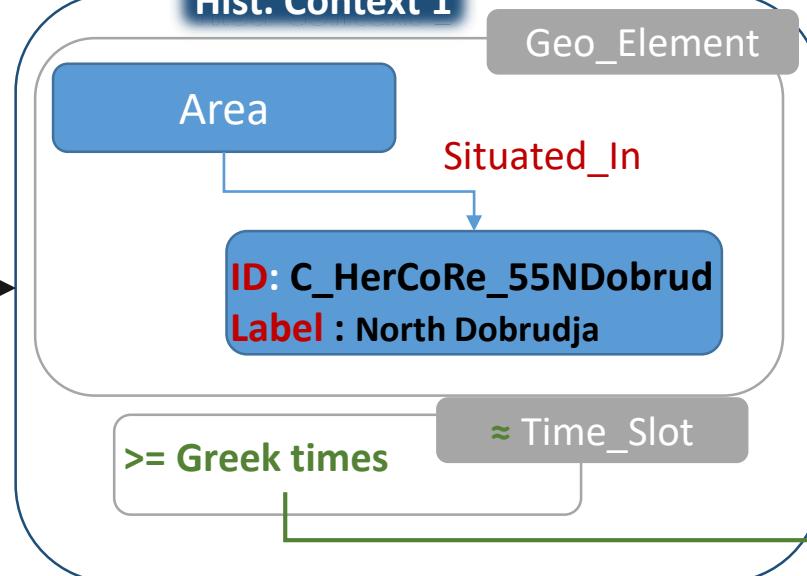


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Hist. Context 1



Part of Northern Dobrudja, coming from the Greek term Σύρφοι --Syrphoi;

Class (Syrfia Annotation

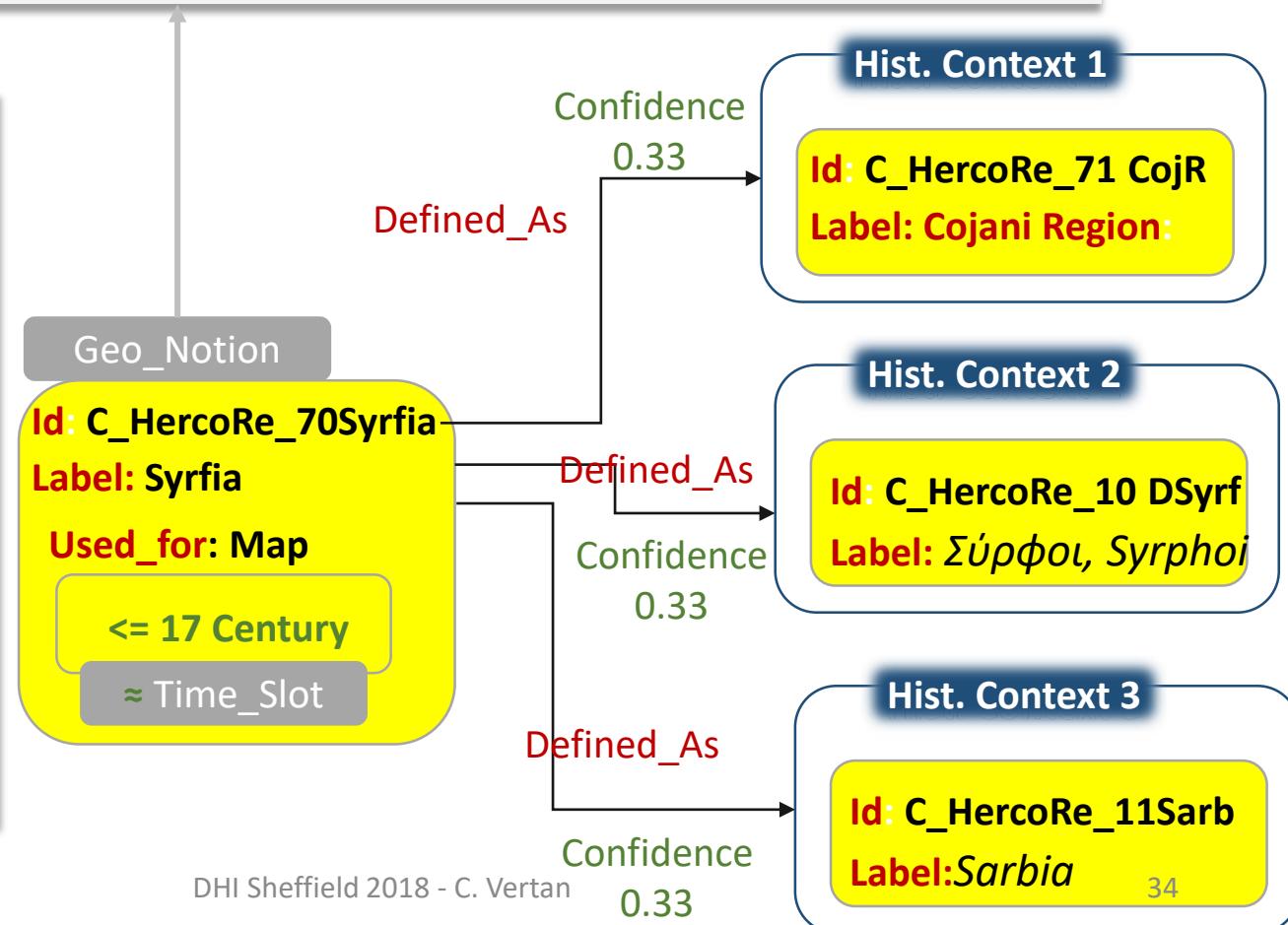
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)

Syrfia is
the abandoned name of a region
in Eastern Europe, used on
historical maps until 17th
century, designating

- a part of Northern Dobrudja, coming from the Greek term Σύρφοι - *Syrphoi*, or
- The Cojani region from western Macedonia, today in Greece but in turkish times in the “Serfia sangiac” having the capital Σέρβια, *Servia* ;
- Sârbia, due to phonetic association.





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Orteliusmap 1570

Syrfia is the abandoned name of a region in Eastern Europe, used on historical maps until 17th century, designating

- a part of Northern Dobrudja, coming from the Greek term Σύρφοι - *Syrphoi*, or
- The Cojani region from western Macedonia, today in Greece but in turkish times in the "Serfia sangiac" having the capital Σέρβια, *Servia* ;
- Sârbia, due to phonetic association.

Instance_Of

Geo_Notion

Id: C_HercoRe_70Syrfia
Label: Syrfia
Used_for: Map

<= 17 Century

≈ Time_Slot

Confidence

0.2

Defined_As

Hist. Context 1

Id: C_HercoRe_71 CojR
Label: Cojani Region:

Defined_As

0.7

Hist. Context 2

Id: C_HercoRe_10 DSyrf
Label: Σύρφοι, *Syrphoi*

Defined_As

Confidence

0.1

Hist. Context 3

Id: C_HercoRe_11Sarb
Label: Sarbia

Orchan having in his Father's Life-time (as it is said) taken Prusa (2), and subdued
the Territory of that City to his dominion, spends the first year of his Reign in settling the
affairs of Afia, and establishing his new Empire

green = linguistic annotation (N., V, Prep, ...)
yellow= from the ontology
orange= vagueness marker.

(2) [Having taken Prusa] The Christian Prusa to the time of Othman, who they tell us,
died the following year. This mistake seems to arise from the loss of Prusa (which was a
very great calamity) being known to Greece before the news of Othman's death could
arrive there .

Annotation-Environment Functionality

- Several Layers of Annotation (e.g. linguistic, editorial, text structure, domain specific).
- Annotation layers are interconnected
- Synchronisation between different text variants (original, translation editorial remarks)
- Discontinuous annotation segments
- Controlled automatisation of manual annotation
- Need of user-friendly annotation interfaces
- Modular Architecture flexible at changes (new layers, new annotation categories)
- Import of automatic annotation (basic linguistic, basic vagueness)

Work ahead

- Semantic Linking between the map and „Geo_notions“
 - Formal representation of vagueness markers
 - Adaptation of existent fuzzy reasoners
 - Specification of user scenarios
 - Visualisation of results
 - Reuse and enhance the ontology
- AND..
- the entire hermeneutic analysis

