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# Lexicographic Treatment of Lexemes with a Cultural and Historical Significance

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**Abstract:** This paper analyses the treatment of specific lexical items which belong to rituals and customs, and in that way they depend on the concept, organization and symbolism of the very act, whose part they represent. This type of lexicon can be understood only within specific spheres whose part it is. These are lexemes that go back to the distant past and form complex concepts that rely on numerous encyclopedic-type facts. Theoretical and methodological postulates of the theory of possible worlds can serve as a very functional approach in the lexicographic presentation of these lexemes. The possible world is an analytical concept present in the domain of modal logic, where statements about the same, similar or different worlds are ascertained, confirmed or refuted by means of indeterminacy, necessity and probability. Lexemes of this type imply encyclopedic knowledge related to past times that are not close and necessarily known to contemporary man. These complex concepts that go back in time from the modern world represent one possible world. It is possible through the semantically possible world, and the reconstruction of the world of the concept sphere. The analysis starts with these lexemes and their lexicographic treatment in Vuk's Dictionary, the Dictionary of the Lužnica Dialect, the Dictionary of the Timok Dialect, and the single-volume Serbian Dictionary of Matica Srpska. The question arises as to how to place the concept of rituals and customs into the lexicographic paper since the usual descriptive semantic lexicographic definition is insufficient for that type of lexicography. Vuk's approach opens the possibility of space for the concept of a possible world of rituals and customs in the framework of space, which is enabled by the confirmation in the structure of a full dictionary entry.

**Keywords:** Linguistic Cultural Lexicon, Concept Sphere, Theory of Possible Worlds, Point of View, Perspective, Rituals and Customs, Structure of a Lexicographic Paper, Confirmation

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## 1. Introduction

The paper begins with the assumption that the specificity of the semantic structure of a lexeme of a certain type should reflect its lexicographic treatment, and be in line with it.

In other words, lexemes that denote objects and have a specific referent will be presented lexicographically in one way, and completely different lexemes that denote cultural-historical concepts that are impossible to understand without appropriate collective code competence.

The subject of the research is the lexicographic treatment of ten lexemes, selected for this occasion, which are impossible to understand without the elements of encyclopedic ethno-cultural elements.

Namely, the following lexemes were considered: *rođenje*, *smrt*, *Božić*, *Uskrs* (*Veligden*), *Koleda*, *dodola*, *slava*,

*preslava*, *kolač*. Understanding these lexemes implies certain knowledge related to the rites, customs and religion of the Serbian people. Each lexeme represents a kind of cultural-historical concept. In fact, these lexemes form a kind of focus around which the lexemes that accompany the usual and ritual ceremony are grouped. The usual and ritual vocabulary is related to a certain culture, but it is also related to the territory. For example, all wedding customs in Serbia have something in common, but they can also differ significantly, depending on the region; therefore, we have different customs in Šumadija, and different ones in Zaplanje. Furthermore, both Serbs and Russians celebrate Christmas, and both are Orthodox, but the customs that accompany the holiday differ significantly with these two peoples. We were interested in whether there were specifics in their lexicographic treatment as well.

Culture can be explicit and implicit. Explicit culture is defined as a system of typical standardized patterns of behavior that denote external, visible, manifestations of culture such as: specific way of manufacture, eating habits, dressing styles, raising children, and finally, typical rituals, customs and ceremonies.

Implicit culture means the internal, subjective "core of the culture", which consists of the motives, standards and characteristics of the members of that culture, which are transferred to following generations through tradition, and which determine the visible way of life. It is a system of cultural beliefs, values, norms and premises that form the basis and determine the regularities in the external, explicit and institutionalized way people behave.

The custom is a rule established by a long repetition in a society. It is a type of behavior that is traditionally established and is distinctive to all members of one ethnic community or culture. Its strength and perseverance lies in respecting tradition. It is a powerful regulator of people's social behavior.

By general definition, a rite is any formal act that expresses sacred and religious teaching. Rituals exist in religious and secular aspects of social life. The ritual action is imbued with common social meanings that are transmitted by custom and tradition. Although they are usually studied within the religious context, one can consider rituals in secular society as well, in, for example, performing arts and civic ceremonies.

In religion, rituals consist of established gestures, as well as verbal patterns by which a person expresses their attitude towards what they consider sacred. When archaic polytheistic religions became extinct, certain rites, such as *badnjak*, entered folklore and customs.

Customs are defined as traditionally established patterns of behavior with normative, ceremonial and symbolic meanings characteristic of a social community. The term custom implies regulated social practice and accepted rules of conduct that are regulated informally and distinguish one social group from another. They are most often realized in social groups such as the family, the church, the local community, a professional association, and in situations that are repeated at regular intervals.

## 2. Linguo-Cultural Lexics

Linguo-cultural vocabulary can be: non-equivalent<sup>1</sup> vocabulary and vocabulary that has conceptual equivalents in another language.

As an example of non-equivalent vocabulary, we can cite *Maslenica* among Russians and *Dodola* among Serbs.

*Maslenica* originates from pagan customs. It is a holiday that sends off winter and welcomes spring. This holiday is

considered to be one of the happiest holidays. People see each other, pay a visit to other people, play and sing. Pancakes are a mandatory dish at the table during *Maslenica*. Pancakes used to have a magical function. They were associated with the Sun as a source of life because they are round in shape. *Maslenica* is actually a straw doll that is burned at the end of the holiday, and thus symbolically represents the departure of winter.

*Dodola* or *Perperuna* is a creature from Slavic mythology that represents the goddess of rain and is associated with the god Perun, the god of thunder. *Dodola* are pagan rituals aimed at summoning the rain with dance and song. *Dodole* are young girls dressed in torn clothes, with wreaths of wheat, grass and flowers on their heads. The main *dodola* had to be an orphan or born after the death of the father. *Dodole* gathered in the summer during droughts. They wore a crown of oak leaves because the oak was a symbol of the god Perun.

The lexemes we have chosen for the analysis represent a kind of focus of lexical-semantic fields, and with other lexemes close to them, they build cultural concepts. Some of these focal lexemes are related to the European (birth, death), some to the narrower Orthodox cultural plan (*Božić*, *Uskrs*), and some belong to the group of non-equivalent vocabulary (*slava*, *preslava*, *Koleda*, *Dodola*).

This lexicon is special in that it has a connotative macro component of lexical meaning. This component implies that the lexeme is semantically marked because it contains the expressive relation of the speech community to what it is named by that lexeme. Unlike the usual connotation where the individual attitude of the speaker is present, this connotative macro component implies the attitude of the entire language collective. In that case, the connotation becomes part of the speaker's code competence (p. 44-45) [5].

"Language is deeply immersed in culture through the meaning of words."<sup>2</sup> Bartmisky stresses that lexicon has this possibility to be treated as a kind of classifier of collective experiences. He believes that it opens the access to the conceptual sphere of ideas and representations related to culture (p. 201) [6].

Each of these lexemes by code-competent speakers is understood exclusively in the context of ordinary and ritual actions that are related to them. Some of these lexemes have a universal existential dimension (birth, death), although customs and rituals related to them are spatially, religiously and culturally marked. Some are related to Orthodoxy and Christianity in general (*Božić*, *Uskrs*), but also show cultural specifics, and some belong to groups of non-equivalent vocabulary (*slava*, *preslava*, *Dodola*, *koleda*), i.e. they are related to a specific cultural context. For example, *Koleda*, as an old Slavic custom, has one ritual character among Russians, and a completely different one among Serbs.

If the lexeme implies a linguo-cultural concept, the question is how to process it lexicographically and where to

<sup>1</sup> "Non-equivalent lexics" is a phrase that describes words and constant sets of words (established syntagms) that refer to realities (things, processes, situations) present in the life and culture of the community of that language, but which do not exist in the life practice of some other linguistic unit, so they do not have corresponding lexical units (p. 37) [5].

<sup>2</sup> (p. 34) [6].

place the data of this nature in the structure of the lexicographic article.

Let us briefly recall the dictionary microstructures (p. 131) [15], i.e. word entry structure. In doing so, we will list only the basic elements of the structure without going into details. The most general division implies a two-part structure of: lemma and interpretation/definition.<sup>3</sup> Lemma implies a lexeme in its basic form with the necessary prosodic and grammatical qualifications. Interpretation implies the semantic structure of a given lexeme that can be given in the form of a descriptive lexicographic definition or a synonym (it can be combined, using both), and the contextual use that is given through examples and through glosses. This contextual use is actually a space that provides opportunities for listing encyclopedic elements, and as such, is ideal for cultural-historical vocabulary and explanations related to the connotative macro component of a lexical meaning.

For this occasion, the material from Vuk's *Srpski Rječnik*–Serbian Dictionary from 1818, and the material from two dialect dictionaries of the *PT* speech zone were reviewed. Vuk's *Rječnik*<sup>4</sup> was chosen because, as researchers say, it is an encyclopedia of the Serbian people in a nutshell, and these two dialect dictionaries (p. 169) [14], *The Dictionary of the Lužnice Dialect* and *the Timok Dialect Dictionary*, were chosen because they originate from archaic Serbian dialects on the outskirts of the Serbian-speaking territory, and therefore, the customs and rites often differ.

### 3. The Theory of Possible Worlds

Language, as it is known, has its referential function. We know that, according to the traditional understanding, one expression denotes an object, which is its referent.

However, what happens when a linguistic expression does not refer to the material, to the object? According to Carnap (p. 18) [12], natural languages have the property of being able to build the world they refer to (the universe of speech).

Leibniz introduces possible worlds for ethical and theological reasons. Leibniz believes that there are many worlds in the divine mind, but that only ours, which is better than the others, is actualized. But the very idea of them, which has once more become relevant in the semantics of possible worlds, and which appears within the cognitive narratology (p. 11) [8] of the 1960s, is free of these connotations. The focus is on the fact that every rational human activity includes the consideration that things could or can be realized in different ways, and that, accordingly, it is possible that there are other worlds besides the one we inhabit (p. 48) [7].

All the semantics of possible worlds agree that, instead of the current state of things, i.e. the world as it is, the existence of another or other worlds is possible, but the general disagreement concerns the nature and ontological status of

these states of things (p. 50) [7].

According to modal realism, whose founder is David Lewis, modal worlds are equally real, but they are causally and temporally separated from us, with the current one being here and now, which means that every world is relevant to those who inhabit it.

When Bartminsky enumerates the instruments of cognitive ethnolinguistics, he states both the point of view and perspective as one of the important concepts (p. 38) [6]. He says that the point of view is a key element of the conceptual sphere of seeing precisely because it connects the subject, the action and the object of observation. According to Bartminsky, perspective is a complex concept upgraded by the categories of field of view, point of view, perspective and focal point.

The world of cultural-historical facts necessary for understanding cultural-historical vocabulary represents a kind of conceptsphere, a possible world that we reach for from our actualized one in order to understand the true meaning and significance of rituals and customs, as well as certain lexemes that represent a given conceptsphere.

The theory of the semantics of possible worlds is based on the difference between the current and possible worlds, where the current one is the one that has an autonomous physical existence, while all other worlds are the product of mental activities. Modal words are precisely the actualizers of possible worlds. The semantics of possible worlds is based on them. The difference between possible worlds and the current one is actually based on the fact that actuality depends on the speaker, i.e. on the deictics of *me*, *here*, *now*, which really means that the actuality of the world has its foundation not only in mental activities but also in language.

Precisely this theory seemed suitable to us for understanding the meanings of the different types of lexeme structures and their possible lexicographical presentations.

The recipient is an average competent speaker of the Serbian language. His position is *here* and *now*. When, for example, it is a question of constituting the meaning of a lexeme that has an objectified meaning, a concrete referent can easily be achieved with a semantic definition of a descriptive character that includes all relevant characteristics (*diferetia specifica*) of the named object. However, when it comes to a lexeme that presupposes a cultural-historical concept to the average speaker, it is necessary to emphasize the usual, ritual elements related to a specific concept in order for the meaning structure to be complete in the lexicographic article, which means much more than giving a semantic descriptive definition. At the same time, the position *I* (average competent speaker) (position here, now) may be in a situation where they do not know enough about the cultural-historical background of a particular concept.

### 4. Analysis

The analysis includes lexemes from the domain of common and ritual lexicon, i.e. lexemes that have a certain special cult and cultural status in the lexicon of the Serbian

<sup>3</sup> The structure of the dictionary item is given according to (p. 141-147) [11].

<sup>4</sup> "Vuk envisioned the Serbian dictionary as a portrait of the Serbian people..."(p. 55) [9].

language. The question arises as to how they are lexicographically processed, primarily due to the specificity of their denotations.

#### *Birth – Death.*

There are no determinants with these terms in Vuk's Serbian Dictionary, nor are there any described customs.

The verbs *rođi* and *rođi se* appear in *The Dictionary of the Lužnice Dialect* (p. 906) [2], as well as a large number of prefixes: *izrođi, odrođi, preporođi, srođi se...* The verb is given in the lemma in the form of a present tense because the speeches of this zone do not have an infinitive. The lexicographic article gives grammatical information about the verb gender, semantic descriptive definition (*dođe na svet rođenjem*), and confirmations (*Dete rođeno u grad, ovce i koze neje video. Koji kude se rođi, tam si mu je najdobro, pa nigde ništa da nema*).

In *the Timok Dialect Dictionary*, *rođen* (p. 730) [3] and the lexeme *babice* (p. 12-13) [3] occur. The verb is given in the form of a past passive participle, and is defined in the following way: the one who was born. Confirmation follows: *Čovek je za muku zdaden i rođen da se pati*. Eng.: *Man was born for torment and born to suffer*.

The lexeme *babice*, which is given as a *pluralia tantum*, also states the belief that midwives are invisible evil beings who attack newborns and mothers at night with the intention of killing them. *Kad babice reše nekoga da umore, one ga prvo uspu, pa tag dojdju da mu piju krv*. Eng.: *When the midwives decide to kill someone, they put them to sleep first, and then they come to drink their blood*.

In Vuk's Dictionary, *Babine* appears as a determinant word and is accompanied by a custom: *Babine obično traju sedam dana. Za tije sedam dana dolaze žene na babine (i donesu čast, pite, uštipke, rakiju, vino i sl. i detetu darove), te se časte i vesele, a noću dođu komšije i komšinice, poznanici i poznanice, te čuvaju babine, tj. sjede svu noć kod porodilje, i razgovaraju i pjevaju, a osobito treću i sedmu noć. (Nije sedmu noć dočuvan – imaju običaj reći onome ko je malo suludast* (p. 15) [1]) Eng.: *Babine usually lasts for seven days. During those seven days, women come to babine (and bring presents, pies, donuts, rakia, wine, etc. and gifts to the child), and they treat themselves and rejoice, and at night neighbors come, acquaintances both male and female, and look after babine, i.e. they sit all night with the mother, and talk and sing, especially on the third and seventh nights. (They did not keep an eye on him on the seventh night – they have a habit of telling the one who is a little crazy* (p. 15) [1]):

In Vuk's Dictionary and *the Timok Dialect Dictionary*, there is no token of death in the status of a determinant word. In *The Dictionary of the Lužnice Dialect*, we have this lexeme in the status of a determinative word, accompanied by the plural form of death and a semantic descriptive definition – the cessation of life. Confirmations follow: *Smrt dođi kad mu je rečeno, i ne može da čeka da se premenjuješ. U našu kuću se useliše smrtovi, prvo umere bašta, pa mati, pa brat, i toj sve za dve godine. Svakome se živi, neje džabe neka baba dumala: Idi smrče, na unučje*. Eng.: *Death comes*

when it is told, and it cannot wait for you to change your clothes. Death moved into our house; first the father died, then the mother, then the brother, and all that in two years. Everyone wants to live, it is not in vain that a grandmother said: *Go Death, take a grandchild*.

In the RMSJ, both with the word *rođiti* (p. 1170) [4] and *rođen* (p. 1171) [4], there is no data related to the beliefs, customs or rituals described under this entry. The semantic realizations of the verb *rođiti* are given, as well as idiomatic expressions that are related to it, and the past passive participle of the verb *rođen*.

*Babine* represent a period of six weeks after birth. It is believed that then the child visits the spirits or deities of fate. The spirits determine not only how long the child will live, but also what kind of death they will die. When the arrival of the spirits was expected, everything in the house had to be clean and tidy. A child in clean diapers, next to them bread and wine, basil, are placed, as well as gold or silver coins. All this represents a kind of sacrifice, a gift given to the spirits, and in return, they are expected to be gentle in their fortune-telling.

Among Serbs, there is a custom that while a small child is in the house, no fire should be given from the house, especially not in the evening. Nothing should be given out of the house while the child is small, so that they do not cry and no evil happens to them.

In the period of *Babine*, bread, roast chicken, a bottle of red wine, a piece of cheese and onion are prepared for the mother. The bread should be broken with someone who is not married or with a younger family member. The same person takes a bite of bread and leaves the bite in the child's crib for forty days while *Babine* lasts. The other things listed above should be tried with one bite at a time. In addition, in the period of *Babine*, the light in the room where the child sleeps should not have been turned off.

#### *Božić (Christmas)*

In RGL, we meet *Božić* m. rel. *Božić* (p. 54) [2]. –*Božić se praznuje tri dana. Uoči Božić se prase ne goji. Za Božić se znalo: dva dana predi njeg se klalo nekvo živinče, ali treba da bude obavezno sbinjče, a neje nekakva druga životinjka*. Eng.: *Christmas is celebrated for three days. On the eve of Christmas, the pig cannot be fattened. It was known about Christmas: two days before it, some animal is slaughtered, but it must be a pig, and not some other animal*.

*Božić* (VR, 39) m. *Festum nativitis Christi. Uoči Božića, pošto se badnjaci unesu i nalože na vatru, uzme dođomačica slame i kvočući (a đeca za njom pijučući) prospe po sobi, ili po kući ako nema sobe. Potom uzmu nekoliko oraa i bace po salami. Poslije večere, pjevaju i vesele se*. Eng.: *On Christmas Eve, once the Yule log is brought in and put on the fire, the housewife takes some straw and, clucking (while the children are chirping behind her), spreads it around the room, or around the house if there is no room. Then they take a few walnuts and throw them on the straw. After dinner, they sing and rejoice*.

In the main one-volume Dictionary, the determinant Christmas is defined as stylistically neutral, unmarked, as a

lexeme of the general lexical fund –*veliki hrišćanski praznik posvećen rođenju Isusa Hrista*. Eng.: a great Christian holiday dedicated to the birth of Jesus Christ (p. 99) [4].

If we apply the model of possible worlds, the position of the current world: *me, here, now* – that would in other words mean: the position *I* points to the recipient, they are the one who observes from the plane *here* and *now* (synchronous perspective).

The recipient of Vuk's Dictionary is a representative of the bourgeois class, and the material and spiritual culture of the Serbian rural environment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century should be brought closer to them.

The recipient of dialect dictionaries is a man of the modern age to whom customs and rituals are related to cultural concepts that have lived in the Serbian people for centuries and are also quite foreign and relatively unknown.

The recipient of the Master Dictionary is also a person of the modern age, and it is assumed that they are an educated, competent speaker. It is assumed that they are broadly educated, but when it comes to ethno-cultural elements of general culture, we can assume insufficient information, because the recipient must have special education to know these elements of Serbian culture that are related mainly to some past times.

For a speaker of the Serbian language from a synchronous perspective, cultural and historical heritage is not current (many customs and rituals do not exist in the modern moment), but a possible world from the past about which one should have special knowledge. His mental reconstruction is not always possible and accessible to the average speaker.

Positions *now* and *here* become positions *then* and *there* (immediate reality – recent past), and should be reconstructed using the elements present in the lexicographic article.

If the lexicographic treatment of such concepts, as in Matica's monograph, is left without information about the customs and rituals related to such lexemes, and they are actually the focus of complex collective concepts, the recipient will be deprived of important information, and will not be able to reconstruct the whole concept in his consciousness because of fact that the elements that constitute the concept date from the past and are related, above all, to the rural environment.

Examples from our dictionaries show that this vocabulary is not adequately lexicographically processed, because a modern speaker misses the information concerning the cultural past. They do not know the nature and rituals of customs and rites; even when they are familiar with the ritual, they do not understand its symbolism.

Out of the analyzed dictionaries, only Vuk's Serbian Dictionary provides more information, often describing only a ritual or custom, or adding some beliefs that are related to it. Vuk does that in the part of the lexicographic article that concerns confirmation and allows a somewhat longer text. In this way, Vuk places the lexeme in the specific structure of the concept of customs or rituals, creating a possible world of customary and ritual values and beliefs.

According to the Serbian custom, on Christmas Day, straw

is brought into the house because it symbolizes the place where Jesus Christ was born. The main task for children and at the same time the biggest fun for them is looking for gifts and sweets under the straw. Children, imitating chickens, go behind their mother "hen" and look for hidden gifts and sweets. This is a symbolic representation of parental love, that is, the love of Christ for the human race.

This is just one segment of Christmas customs described in dictionaries. There was no ritual of cutting the Christmas tree (first a prayer for the health and happiness of the family is said, then the Christmas tree is cut with three blows obliquely from the east, and care is taken that the tree falls directly to the ground, not leaning on the neighboring tree), bringing in smoked meat (leaning on the east wall where the icons and the chandeliers are), Christmas table (metal utensils are not allowed, 12 dishes are placed), etc.

Therefore, the following should be kept in mind:

1. The customs and rituals described are related mainly to the rural environment, which is why there is a need for authors of dialect dictionaries to provide some information about it;
2. If we compare the descriptions of customs and rituals and the information given by Vuk and in dialect dictionaries, it is noticed that they are partial and insufficient;
3. The person of the modern age does not have enough knowledge about customs, rituals and beliefs, and they need to understand the rituals that accompany certain events and holidays.

This vocabulary deserves special treatment in a monolingual descriptive dictionary.

These lexemes require more complex treatment, providing data that would organize and structure a specific conceptual sphere. The most logical space for this type of data is confirmation.

We believe that lexemes of this type should contain a minimum of information that could bring to the mind of the average speaker a collective idea of the concepts of this type.

In order to achieve this, it is necessary for the lexicographic article to contain elements that will enable the position of *I* (modern speaker) to actualize a possible world from the past (customs and rituals). So, *here* and *now* for such notions is a historical and cultural collective experience.

I (current world).....Past (possible world, world of the past, traditions).

Here, now.....Past.

That world of the past and traditions lives in the present, so this projection of worlds is necessary. Tradition is a part of everyday life.

## 5. One Possible Model of Lexicographic Treatment Shown on the Example of the Lexeme *Uskrs (Vaskrs)*

*Vaskrs* (Easter) (p. 24/28) [10] is the biggest and most important Christian holiday. It implies knowledge of a certain

symbolism of the Christian faith itself, but also as a favorite holiday it binds to itself the customs of the people who celebrate it.

We will give a description of the holiday and the customs that accompany it, and in the text, certain lexemes that would have the status of a lemma (determinative words) will be visually highlighted in the dictionary. All these lexemes taken together form a conceptual sphere within which we understand the holiday itself and all the cultural-historical elements that accompany it. In the confirmation of each lexeme, which is a part of the conceptsphere, there should be an explanation that illuminates the segment of the conceptsphere. All the confirmations taken together should constitute a possible world of the past, and explain and clarify those elements unknown to the person of the modern age. That world of customs and beliefs would correspond to this world now and here, complement it and make it complete, while making the rites and customs themselves more understandable.

Easter is preceded by *Vrbica* (Lazarus' Saturday). It is a holiday on the eve of *Cveti* (Flowers) and is dedicated to the memory of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, where the children joyfully welcomed and greeted him. This is a holiday dedicated to *deca*— children. On that day, mothers dress their children in formal clothes and take them to church, buy them *zvončiči*— bells tied to the tricolor rib and put them around their necks. The children also carry young *vrbove grančice*— willow twigs on their heads as they walk around the church, and then they take them home and place them next to the icon and the cresset.

The week in which Easter falls is called Holy Week or *Strasna sedmica*. These are the days in which the memory of the betrayal, arrest and suffering of Christ is celebrated. The most important days, apart from Easter, are Holy Thursday — *Veliki četvrtak* (when the Lord instituted the holy sacrament of Holy Communion and it is worth taking communion on that day) and Good Friday — *Veliki petak* (remembrance of Christ's suffering and also the day of the strictest fast). On Good Friday afternoon, the Shroud — *Plaštanica* is displayed (a canvas showing the laying of Christ in the tomb), which is placed on a specially decorated table in front of the altar. Believers crawl under the table where the Shroud is placed. There is a belief that when going through, one should pray to God and think of some beautiful wish, and that wish will be fulfilled.

Easter is the happiest Christian holiday. On that day, Christ rose from the dead, overcame death and gave eternal life to all people, from Adam and Eve onwards. Every week of the year is dedicated to Easter, so every week is a little Easter. Easter is a moving holiday. It can fall on April 4 at the earliest, and on May 8 at the latest. This holiday is associated with the beautiful custom of giving painted eggs. The red egg means joy for those who give it and who receive it. Eggs are painted or dyed on Good Friday. The housewife prays and crosses herself, then she adds a little consecrated water — *osvećena voda* to the one in which the eggs will be cooked. Eggs are dyed with *varzil* (red color). In the past, eggs were

painted with wax and a quill. The egg usually read H.V. and V.V. (*Hristos vaskrse*— Christ is risen, and *Vaistinu vaskrse*— He is risen indeed). The first colored egg is called *čuvarkuća*— a guardian egg. It is stored and kept until the next Easter. The painting of eggs is done in memory of the event when Mary Magdalene visited the Emperor Tiberius in Rome with the Most Holy Mother of God, taking a red egg to him and greeting him with the words: Christ is risen! The color red symbolizes Christ's innocent blood and is also the color of resurrection. There is no resurrection without suffering and death. Red — *Crvena* is the color of Christianity and the Christian church.

The Easter celebration itself is accompanied by certain customs and rituals. On that day in the morning, the church bells ring for a long time, announcing the holiday itself. On that day, the host goes to church with his family. On that day, people greet each other saying: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! That greeting lasts until the Day of the Ascension of Jesus — *Spasovdan*.

When he comes home after church, the host lights a candle, takes an incense burner and incense, burns incense on all the members of the household who stand in prayer. It is customary to sing the Easter troparion or read the Lord's Prayer. After that, all the family members sit down to a festive table rich with various dishes to have lunch.

There is a bowl of decorated eggs on the table, the host takes a dyed egg — *farbano jaje* first, and then all the family members follow. After that there is a competition whose egg is the strongest. The competition in egg tapping — *kucanje jajima* is a joy for the whole family, and especially for children. On Easter, the Easter egg is eaten first, followed by the rest of the dishes.

If one of the guests comes at Easter time, they are first given a dyed egg.

The first day after Easter is called Easter Monday — *Pobusani ponedeljak*. It is a day dedicated to the dead. On that day, the graves of the dead should be covered with patches of green grass. On that day, candles are lit, graves are arranged and memorial services are held, and Easter eggs are also laid on the graves of the dead.

Lexemes: *Vrbica*, *Cveti*, *deca*, *zvončiči*, *vrbove grančice* (*vrba*), *Strasna sedmica*, *Veliki četvrtak*, *Veliki petak*, *Plaštanica*, *nedelja*, *jaje*, *crvena boja*, *osvećena voda*, *čuvarkuća*, *farbano jaje*, *kucanje jajima*, *Pobusani ponedeljak* keep the memory of the main narrative thread of the gospel. Christ, who proves to be the chosen one (the messiah), is betrayed, tortured, killed in order to be resurrected and prove his divine origin. And that makes the Christian concept known to both the Western and Eastern Churches. This Christian basis is the starting point for further beliefs: a wish is made when passing under a shroud which, if good, will be fulfilled, then customs like: to dress the children nicely and take them to church on Lazarus' Saturday, to leave the first painted egg to guard the house and housemates until the next Easter, to go to church on Sunday, to celebrate the resurrection of Christ through ritual greetings and tapping painted red eggs with one another. This is how a concept sphere of words-focus is built, which introduces various beliefs and

customs into the famous story of Jesus.

In the descriptive monolingual dictionary, all these lexemes can be found in the function of the title word of the lexicographic article, and along with some of their secondary meanings, a description of customs and beliefs can be given as an illustration of that meaning.

Although these lexemes diffuse in the dictionary because the dictionary follows the alphabetical sequence, they easily evoke the conceptual sphere related to Easter.

Together, they form a possible world of tradition and historical memory, which should certainly be the heritage of the modern age as well.

*Table 1. Possible Lexicographic Treatment Model*

A lexeme of cultural and historical significance	The lemma according to which it is treated in the descriptive dictionary	Possible confirmation text	Conceptosphere
<i>Vrbica</i> (Lazarus' Saturday)	Child	A children's holiday when it is customary for mothers to dress the children nicely and take them to church. Mothers hang bells around the children's necks, and carry willow twigs on their heads as they walk around the church.	
<i>Cveti</i> (Flowers)	Easter	A holiday before Easter that celebrates the memory of Christ's entry into Jerusalem.	
<i>Strasna sedmica</i> (Holy Week)	Week	The week before Easter.	
<i>Veliki četvrtak</i> (Holy Thursday)	Week	The day when a person should receive their communion.	
<i>Veliki petak</i> (Good Friday)	Week	The day of the strictest fasting.	
<i>Plaštanica</i> (The Shroud)	Easter	The shroud is taken out on Easter. Believers crawl under the table on which the shroud is displayed. It is believed that when going through, one should make a wish and it will come true.	<i>VASKRS</i>
<i>Osvećena voda</i> (Holy Water)	Water	Holy water is water that is consecrated during rituals and is considered special and healing among Christians.	
<i>Vaskršnje jaje</i> (Easter Egg)	Egg	Dyed egg.	
<i>Čuvarkuća</i> (Houseguard)	Egg	The first painted egg on Easter, which will be stored and kept until next year.	
<i>Crvena boja</i> (Red color)	red (adjective)	The color of the church and the Easter egg that symbolizes the innocent blood of Christ.	
<i>Kucanje jajima</i> (Egg Tapping)	Easter	Easter custom. The first egg is taken by the host, then the others follow. They tap each other's eggs before the festive Easter lunch.	
<i>Pobusani ponedeljak</i> (Easter Monday)	Week	A day dedicated to the dead when the grass on the graves should be dug up and a day set aside for memorial services and the laying of Easter eggs on the graves.	

## 6. Conclusion

Customs and rituals are part of the cultural and historical identity of a nation. The lexicon with which they are marked has a pronounced macro component of lexical meaning that is enriched with elements characteristic of a given cultural-historical context and, of course, represents a certain semantic heritage of the collective that uses it.

This vocabulary deserves to include these encyclopedic elements of the semantic structure into the structure of the dictionary article in the descriptive monolingual dictionary. The best place in the structure of the article for that is the confirmation.

Perhaps the most appropriate would be the model from Vuk's dictionary, where Vuk, first of all, in order to win over the representative of the then bourgeoisie for his ideas about literary language, tries to make the material and spiritual culture of the rural environment approachable, exhaustively stating all the cultural and historical terms and all the customs following those terms. Thus, on the one hand, he preserves tradition and culture from oblivion and modernization, but also popularizes certain cultural and historical concepts, making them known and recognizable to

all speakers of the Serbian language.

And the modern user of the dictionary needs that historical perspective in some situations.

In that sense, confirmation should be used in the lexicographic article. Confirmation or more of them may contain descriptions of customs and rituals that accompany certain cultural and historical concepts (*Božić, Koleda, dodola...*). Confirmations contain the necessary elements (bringing in and lighting Christmas trees, sprinkling straw, clucking and chirping of the family members at the house, throwing walnuts...) which, in the mind of a modern speaker, help to actualize a possible world (world of past and traditional culture), and to conceptualize the lexicographically processed term in the right way.

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