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Cuvinte cheie: megleno-români, Serbia, al Doilea Război Mondial, Iugoslavia, identitate etnică

Meglenoromânii din Gudurița: limbă și identitate

Rezumat

Prin prezentul articol am dorit să atragem atenția asupra comunității de meglenoromâni din satul Gudurița, care, din cauza numărului extrem de mic de membri, nu a suscitat niciodată atenția cercetătorilor. Gudurița este o localitate multiethnică și multiconfesională, amplasată în apropierea orașului Vârșeț din Serbia, lângă granița cu România. După al Doilea Război Mondial, începând cu anul 1946, coloniști din toate zonele Iugoslaviei s-au stabilit aici, ocupând casele părăsite ale nemților din localitate. Printre aceștia s-au aflat și câteva familii de meglenoromâni din satul Huma, din Republica Macedonia, “invizibili” însă în statisticile oficiale și “camuflați” printre etnicii macedoneni. Analiza limbii vorbite de interlocutorii noștri din Gudurița și a identității pe care aceștia o afirmă se bazează pe interviurile realizate în cadrul cercetărilor de teren din 2014, a căror transcriere parțială o oferim la sfârșitul studiului.

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Megleno-Romanians in Gudurica: Language and Identity

Summary

The essay describes the Megleno-Romanian community in the village of Gudurica (Serbia, near the border with Romania), which, because of the very small number of members, was so far neglected by researchers. After World War II, starting in 1946, colonists from all regions of Yugoslavia settled in this village, occupying deserted houses of the former German inhabitants. Among them were a few Megleno-Romanian families from the village Huma (today in the FY Republic of Macedonia), “invisible” in official statistics and “concealed” among Macedonians. The analysis of the language and identity is based on interviews conducted during field research in 2014 in the village Gudurica. The authors offer partial transcription of the interviews at the end of their paper.

Megleno-Romanians in Gudurica: Language and Identity²

Historical background

Gudurica (*Kudritz* in German) is one of the most interesting settlements in the Vojvodina region of Serbia, characterized by a large number of diverse ethnic and religious communities. Numerous languages and dialects strengthen a diversity which does not divide, but unites the inhabitants of this village, located near the city of Vršac and the border with Romania.

The village was first mentioned in 1385 (Milleker 2004: 35), but information about Gudurica from the Middle Ages and Ottoman rule over the Banat is scarce. In diplomas from the end of the 14th century, the village appears under the name *Kuthres* and *Kutrez*. Colonization of the Banat by Germans started as soon as the province got under Austrian rule (1717), even before the end of the Austro-Turkish War of 1716-1718. The founder of the new settlement, on the site of an older one, was Johann Tez, who arrived in 1719 from the Alsace region, joined by many relatives. From 1720-1730, Count Mercy³ continued to settle Germans in this place, 1751 the village already counted 150 houses. In addition to German names, French and Hungarian ones join them as early as the 18th century (Ibidem: 40); most of them were Catholics. The villagers made a living by cultivating vine, as the region was favorable for vineyards, which remain a symbol of the village. Located in a famous wine region, Kudritz could show, in 1884, 1,271 hectares vineyards, producing 3,000 hectoliters wine per year (Milleker 2003: 101). Apart from winemaking, the villagers were farmers, craftsmen, or traders.

The village still grew in the 19th century: 1838 the village counted 1,235 inhabitants, all of them Catholics. However, already in 1857 the village also counted Orthodox believers, Greek Catholics, Calvinists and Jews among its population. .

At the end of World War I, the Serbian Army entered Kutritz in November 1918, and the until-then Austro-Hungarian village became, like the entire Vojvodina, part of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The Serbian border with Romania was set near Kutritz, on the boundary of the neighbouring village Markovac. According to the first census of the newly established Kingdom, in 1921 Gudurica had 2,097 inhabitants: 2,013 Germans, 53 Hungarians, 15 Serbs, 10 Romanians, 5 Czechoslovaks and one "other" (Milleker 2005: 126).

When Serb volunteers were brought in as new colonizers by the new authorities, the ethnical structure of the village started to change (Barbu, Vasić 2006: 13). During a land reform of 1921, big German and Hungarian land owners lost large plots of land, which were given to Serb colonizers. The following year, the village was renamed Gudurica.

World War II caused radical changes in the life of the locals. The Red Army entered Gudurica

² This study originates from a project of the Institute for Balkan Studies in Belgrade, *Language, Folklore, Migrations in the Balkans* (no. 178010), funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia.

³ Count Claudius Florimund de Mercy (1666-1734) was an Austrian field marshal who contributed substantially to Prince Eugene of Savoy's victories at Petrovaradin (August 1716), Belgrade (1717), and the conquest of the Banat of Temesvár. Named governor of that eastern frontier region, he remained in Hungary until 1734. Mercy strengthened the Banat's defenses and rebuilt the economy through the introduction of new settlers, the construction of roads, and the institution of sound government.

October 1, 1944. Traditions which had been created in two centuries disappeared in a few months. The new Yugoslav communist regime was merciless with the German population, both with former collaborators of the Nazi regime during the German occupation of the Vojvodina, and with civilians, whose only fault was their German ethnicity. Executions, persecutions, repression and deportations to Soviet labor camps followed, accompanied by famine and diseases. The entire



indigenous population of Gudurica vanished: The few survivors fled and the village was deserted (Ibidem: 14).

Gudurica's colonization by Macedonians

In September 1945, Gudurica began to recover as a village. The first colonists, from Slovenia, came to the deserted village, followed by Croats, Serbs from Dalmatia and Central Serbia, by Macedonians, Albanians and Muslim Bosniacs. Among the Macedonians were families of Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians. They were a *hidden minority*, as the authorities did not want to recognize one more people, apart from the six acknowledged ones, which were already building the “brotherhood and unity” of communist Yugoslavia. The Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians were thus victim of the national policy of the Yugoslav communists, for whom the creation of a single Macedonian nation was a must. Due to the small number of Macedonians, supposed to be one of the six peoples (nations) constituting the Yugoslav federation, the new Yugoslav regime needed citizens to “fill the gaps”, and found them among the

Romaniaphone population from Macedonia, speaking two historic Romanian dialects: Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian.

If their existence was secret, or “hidden”, on the territory of the People (later Socialist) Republic of Macedonia, this was also true for Megleno-Romanian and Aromanian speakers who settled in Vojvodina. Lost in a much larger number of Macedonian settlers, they were officially non-existent as a separate ethnic group. As their ethnic identity was rather weak, the Megleno-Romanians and Aromanians who settled in the Serbian Banat (part of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina) were assimilated quickly, mainly through mixed marriages. With few exceptions, not even children from ethnically homogeneous marriages were taught their ancestors language by their parents and grandparents.

Megleno-Romanians and Aromanians were looked at with bewilderment, or ironic comments, by the other villagers, because of their strange, unknown language. The minority complex, present even among the officially recognized ethnic minorities, who had schools, media, literature and culture in their mother tongue, was particularly strong among Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians – and resulted in fear and shame to speak the language of their ancestors. The use of these dialects was strictly limited to family level, and only if the speakers were alone. When persons who did not understand the dialect were present, be they family members or not, these idioms were not used. Today, following the democratization of Serbia after the fall of the Milosevic regime, old people in the Serbian Banat, who still preserve the dialect, have begun to speak “in public” in their mother tongue. We refer here to the Aromanians in Pančevo,⁴ and also to the Megleno-Romanians in Gudurica.

Post-war Gudurica saw its social and economic conditions gradually improving in the years following the first colonizations. In 1948, the new communist authorities counted 1,474 inhabitants in their first census. The school was reopened in the school year 1946-1947, with classes in Serbian, Macedonian and Slovenian. (Ibidem: 14) Intermarriages left apart, no more Germans were registered in Gudurica any longer. The rise in the number of inhabitants, who came from several regions of Yugoslavia, facilitated economic progress of the village in following decades. Now being part of the plant “Vršački vinogradi”, the vineyards of Gudurica became again famous. Despite the period of war and crisis which Serbia experienced in the 1990’s, Gudurica remains a thriving community, both economically and through its multiculturalism, which became an emblem of the village. Today, about 15 ethnic groups, speaking different languages and belonging to different confessions and cultures, live together, including a few “Vlach” (Megleno-Romanian) citizens, who do not declare themselves as such at censuses, and whose names are long Slavicized.

The colonization of Macedonians (including Romaniaphone families) started in 1946 in several villages of the Serbian Banat: Jabuka, Glogonj and Kačarevo (near Pančevo), Plandište, Hajdučica, Stari Lec, Dužine and Gudurica (near Vršac) and, in smaller numbers, in other villages. In Jabuka, among colonizing families of Slavic Macedonians, were four Aromanian families (Mladenovski 1988: 90). Some newcomers did not adjust to their new life in rural Serbian Banat. From highlands and herds they moved to lowlands, but found they were not ready to adjust to farming, so they returned to their native places. A few Megleno-Romanian families from Gudurica

⁴ The descendants of the Aromanians in Serbia live dispersed, for the most part in town settlements, and are presently experiencing the revitalization of their “heritage language.” In Pančevo, a Banat town settlement, the Aromanian language is currently in the process of being revived by a non-government organization (*In Medias Res*). The language is taught by qualified professors of Aromanian using textbooks from Romania. There is an Association of Aromanians (*Lunjina*) in Belgrade, and among its members are active speakers of the Aromanian language (Sikimić 2014: 72).

also returned to Macedonia. Those remaining, as mentioned, were already assimilated in their second generation.

Megleno-Romanians in Gudurica

Petar Atanasov, in his monograph *Megleno-Romanian today*, mentions that “from the desire to change their way of life, at the end of the World War II, several Megleno-Romanian families from Huma moved to Gevgelija, and others to Vojvodina, settling in the villages Jabuka, Kačarevo and Gudurica, where the Germans left from” (Atanasov 2002: 11). Whether or not this was indeed their desire, or whether they were forced to do so, remains unclear. The exact number of Megleno-Romanians established in Vojvodina is also unknown, as well as the number of returnees to the FY Republic of Macedonia, where they now settled in urban areas.

The Serbian publicist Stvetlana Nikolin first drew attention to the existence of the tiny Megleno-Romanian community in Gudurica. In 2012, she published a reportage called *Megleno-Romanians of South Banat*, including excerpts from an interview with two Megleno-Romanians,



conducted in 2010: Proše Proševski, born 1936 in Huma, and his son Milan Proševski, born in 1959 in Gudurica. (Nikolin 2012)

In March 2014, we went to Gudurica, where, according to our interlocutors, apart from them, only one other villager still spoke Megleno-Romanian. Our interlocutors were the eldest residents of the village still speaking this Romanian dialect: Kristina and Blagoje Djoševski, born in Huma, 1925 and 1924, respectively. Their son Pera (b. 1955), also took part in the discussion, but spoke in Serbian only, as he understands, but does not speak the dialect. Although Kristina and Blagoje Djoševski spoke Vlach rarely, they were perfectly fluent in the dialect. Our questions, in the beginning asked in Serbian, were answered in Megleno-Romanian, as we had asked for at the beginning of the interview. Later, when we started asking questions in Romanian, both understood them perfectly well, while still answering in their dialect. The interview itself took about two hours and was partially directed. Issues of oral history were tackled, as was their life experiences, concentrating on occupations, daily life and traditions

From Huma to Gudurica

Huma is located in the South-East of the FY Republic of Macedonia, on the slopes of Mount Kožuf, at an altitude of about 840 m, near the border with Greece. The closest town, Gevgelija, is 20 km away. Before the Axis invasion of April 1941 and the occupation of Macedonia by Bulgarian troops, Huma numbered 131 houses and 728 inhabitants, all of them Megleno-Romanians (Atanasov 2002: 8). Today, according to the last census of 2002, Huma is deserted, with only two permanent inhabitants: one Megleno-Romanian and one Bosniac. It is inhabited only in summer, by vacationers using their villas or holiday houses built in recent years.

Kristina's parents left their native village in 1946, and headed for Gudurica, which remained deserted, after the Germans were expelled. Settlement in the village was decided on basis of the ethnic groups, which were part of the Yugoslav people: Slovenes inhabited a whole street named "Slovene street", Macedonians the "Macedonian street", etc. Kristina's parents, Projka and Božin Božinovski, born 1886 and 1889, respectively, and Božin's mother, Ristana, born 1870, in Huma, came to Gudurica within a heterogeneous group of Macedonians from several regions. As mentioned, many failed to adapt to the new climate and way of life, and returned to Macedonia. The descendants of those who remained stayed and today live in urban areas of Serbia, or emigrated to Western Europe (our interlocutors, for example, have relatives in Sweden).

Blagoje Djoševski, our interlocutor, officer in the Yugoslav Army, retired before he turned 40, due to illness. In 1955 he moved with his wife, Kristina, and toddler son, Pera, then 8 months old, to Gudurica, where the climate was favourable for the officer's chronic lung disease. The family bought an abandoned German house, and the father kept himself busy with bee-keeping and hunting.⁵

Recalling their childhood in Huma, Kristina and Blagoje Djoševski, a couple since adolescence, spoke with great satisfaction about Christmas customs, the rough life in the mountains, about the occupations of their parents: agriculture (barley and wheat growing), livestock breeding (especially goats and sheep), and production of dairy products, which men would sell in the city. Striking is the memory of the World War II, when the village, located on the front line, witnessed

⁵ Virgil Coman's observation is illustrative in this respect. The Romanian historian thinks that, overall, the Megleno-Romanians in Yugoslavia evolved, after World War II, within the communist system imposed by Tito, which was different from Stalin's, which dominated the neighbouring communist states. At the same time, the forcefully or willingly giving up the old occupations and migration to urban areas did nothing but further "diluted" ethnically the mass of Megleno-Romanians in their homeland (Coman 2012: 215).

fierce fights between Partizans, Germans and Bulgarians. Thereafter, the inhabitants were forced to leave, some settling in urban centers, others were being “colonized” in the villages of Yugoslavia deserted by the Germans. A moving memory of Kristina is the alleged death of her then-fiancé, who was believed to have died on the front. After a three day’s and three night’s journey of the family, and a fruitless search among hundreds of graves, they found out the fiancée was actually alive. Learning this, the whole village attended a celebration, where the family slaughtered and cooked an ox in the churchyard (*kurban*).⁶

Language and identity

Generally, the ethnic identity of Megleno-Romanians is less pronounced than of the Aromanians. Their small number and dispersal in several states contributed to this. They do not form a compact community anywhere, because of the secular symbiosis with the populations among whom they lived. Assimilation and denationalization policies pursued by their host states, especially after World War I, also did their share. Although the language many Megleno-Romanians still speak at home differs from those of surrounding Slavic populations (Slavic Macedonians, Serbs, Bulgarians) and Greek, to most of them this is not enough to give them a sense of belonging.⁷ Megleno-Romanians living in Greece declare themselves Greeks at censuses, those living in Macedonia – Macedonians, and, to a much smaller extent, as Vlachs, and the few who live in Serbia declare themselves Macedonians.

French anthropologist Dominique Belkis calls Megleno-Romanians “victims of history”, adding that they nevertheless developed cultural and structural strategies to adapt to change, and maintain internal cohesion (Belkis 2001: 229). Our interlocutors’ statement about changing their family name under different regimes illustrates this: “They were Djošević, when the Serbs ruled, then they were Djošev, when the Bulgarians came to power, and when the Macedonians took over, they became Djoševski.” Their mother tongue is the Megleno-Romanian dialect, at the school in Huma they were taught exclusively in Serbian, they do not know Macedonian, but can easily understand it because of the similarities between these two Slavic languages, and at population censuses they declare themselves Macedonians. At state level, this makes them virtually invisible as an ethnic community.⁸

The Megleno-Romanian spoken by Kristina and Blagoje was outstandingly preserved, especially considering that after the death of Blagoje’s parents, they could only speak it to one another. The three family members say they do not understand Aromanians, nor the Vlachs of North-Eastern Serbia, but only the Romanians of Serbian Banat, with whom they often come into contact.⁹ Despite this, they resort to Serbian when talking to them. Even when the Megleno-Romanian community in Gudurica was larger, they would not use their mother tongue in public, for they feared offending other nationalities in the village. Remembering her childhood and adolescence spent in Huma, Kristina talks about the letters she used to send to Blagoje, when he

⁶ For details on *kurban* in the Balkans, see Sikimić, Hristov 2007.

⁷ For details about the ethnic identification of the Megleno-Romanians and the process of acculturation, see Atanasov 2002, Coman 2012, Țircomicu 2004, Lozovanu 2012.

⁸ Dominique Belkis, in an interview with Romanian anthropologist Vintilă Mihăilescu, spoke about the “negative identity constructions” of the Megleno-Romanians, adding that “this does not mean that the absence of claims on behalf of ethnic identity signifies a lack of reference and identity consciousness or a difficulty in instrumentalizing the collective identity” (Mihăilescu 2000).

⁹ We should mention here that Gudurica is in the near vicinity of the Romanian village Markovac.

¹⁰ Thede Kahl, talking about the Islamized Megleno-Romanians from Turkey, says that they write down their dialect using the Turkish alphabet, while those in Greece find their language not suitable for writing (Kahl 2004: 140).

was in the army, which were written both in Serbian and in their Megleno-Romanian dialect, in Cyrillic.¹⁰ The teacher of the village school taught pupils in Serbian only, while the priest, a man from the village, performed the religious service in dialect.

The linguistic and cultural future of Megleno-Romanians heads, inevitably, to acculturation



and assimilation. Ethnologist Emil Țîrcomnicu thinks the Megleno-Romanian dialect will be history in 50 years at a maximum, due to the small number of speakers and dispersal over a vast territory in several states (Țîrcomnicu 2004: 35). The linguist Petar Atanasov however considers that education in standard Romanian could help preserve the dialect, by awakening their national conscience.¹¹ Obviously, cultural policies of the Romanian state could raise the interest in the preservation and use of the Megleno-Romanian dialect. In Vojvodina, with a large Romanian minority, all needed would be convincing the Megleno-Romanian descendants of the importance of learning their ancestral language.¹²

¹¹ See in this collection of studies.

¹² Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković elaborated, in an essay from 2007, on the Romaniophone communities in Serbia (Sorescu-Marinković 2007), pointing to five separate categories: Romanians in the Serbian Banat, the Vlachs of North-Eastern Serbia, the Bayash, recent Romanian immigrants and Romanian speaking Roma. Later, Biljana Sikimić included here also Aromanians (Sikimić 2014). Making one more correction to the model, we can also add the Megleno-Romanians, despite their extremely small number.

Post Scriptum

In September 2014, five months after our first visit, we went again to Gudurica. On arrival, however, we found that Blagoje Djoševski had died. Despite her loss, Kristina happily received us, describing once more their joint, harmonious life. This time, she showed us many old photos from her childhood in Huma, and talked with great pleasure about them. Several of these photographs do illustrate our study.

Transcripts

Following are transcriptions of large parts of our conversations, which we recorded in Gudurica. The participants were the authors, Kristina and Blagoje Djoševski and their son Pera. Interventions in Serbian are marked in italics, as well as Serbian or Macedonian words inserted in the Megleno-Romanian text. The text, one on many voices, is sometimes difficult to follow: Both elder interlocutors speak in Serbian and in their mother tongue, their story is often confirmed, or contradicted, by their son, who functions as an echo (in Serbian only), while the researchers ask clarifying questions in Romanian and Serbian. The second column presents the English translation.

An accurate transcription of these texts is of utmost importance, as this is the only written record of Megleno-Romanian spoken in Serbia. These transcripts, therefore, can also serve as reference material for linguists, or others interested in the Megleno-Romanian dialect – even if the dialect spoken by the Megleno-Romanians in Gudurica will be extinguished in a few years, with the death of the last speaker.

<p>Kristina: <i>Hajde, pitaj me na rumunskom, da vidim da li razumem.</i></p> <p>Annemarie: Cum a fost în cătunul vostru din Macedonia?</p> <p>Kristina: Uma. Bun ăra, c-ăvem stocă multă, stocă ăveam, <i>ovaj, ovce, koze...</i> Oi, capre. A-ngărșesc, a-ngărșesc. <i>Ovako.</i> Cum lantu sirbeam săldi care are agre buni siminam tot, gărâșoru, orzu, grân... Ghiiam di țe stocă țe o-veam. <i>A inače,</i> lantu <i>prihod</i> nu-veam săldi ți sirbeam ațe mâncam. Lantu ți să vă spun? <i>Ovaj,</i> săl nostru cătun cloț era. <i>Ovaj,</i> mult ura bun că-ram toț unu turlie, n-uvea meșaniță lante <i>jezik,</i> lantă nație, nego săldi noi eram în țial cătun. Și slogă-vem, și scăliu-vem, și biserică-vem. <i>Ovaj,</i> a la scăliu nă duțem, ali sârb n-a ănvița, nu ni machedonți, <i>ne makedonski,</i> tari dascăl, <i>nego</i> săldi <i>srpski</i> n-a-nvițat țial dascăl. C-atunțea erau sârbii zaglăviț prin țeli cătunili.</p> <p>Annemarie: <i>To je bilo koja godina?</i></p>	<p>Kristina: Come on, ask me in Romanian, to see wheher I understand it or not.</p> <p>Annemarie: How was it like in your village from Macedonia?</p> <p>Kristina: Huma. It was fine, because we had a lot of animals, sheep, goats... Sheep, goats. I make mistakes, I make mistakes. Like this. People who had good land would sow everything, barley, wheat... We survived due to the animals we had. We didn't have any other income, we would eat what we sowed. What else should I tell you? It was very good in our village, because we were all the same, the languages were not mixed, it was only us in the village. We had understanding, and we had a school, and we had a church. We would go to school, but the teacher would teach us in Serbian, not in Macedonian. Because back then Serbs were in all the villages.</p> <p>Annemarie: What year was that?</p> <p>Kristina: What year was that? Well, I was</p>
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<p>Kristina: Care an-ra? <i>Pa ja sam dvaes peta rodžena. Douăz și ținț anu sam rudită. (...) Nă duțeam la scliu. La scliu isto srpski învățam. A cu nărodu, cu noștri lume sve vlaški nă lăfem. (...)</i></p> <p>Pera: <i>Ja mislim, mi tamo što smo bili, to su stočari. Mi smo trebali da se vodimo kao Rumuni, ne kao Vlasi. Jer mi smo... Kad razumeš rumunski ne možeš da budeš Nemač. Ali vidiš kol'ko je slično? Znači, to je pleme koje je tu, šta ja znam, doterano sa stokom ili pod nekim pritiskom. E sad, taj akcenat, na primer kao, šta ja znam, u Leskovcu ili dole tamo sve. I mi sve više na „t“ i na „l“. Tu ima te razlike. Znači, mi smo poreklom Rumuni, mada neki kažu Cincari, Vlasi, svašta kažu, ali nije ni bitno.</i></p> <p>Mircea: <i>Da li vi govorite jezik?</i></p> <p>Pera: <i>Razumem i govorim, samo nemam s kim.</i></p> <p>Annemarie: <i>A da li razumete Rumune ovde o Banatu?</i></p> <p>Pera: <i>Razumem. Znaš kako? Ja kad sam išao u školu u Vršcu. Ima selo Markovac. I onda ja sve razumem šta su oni pričali. U autobusu. Ali nisam koristio, nisam hteo da se... tako. I sad ih razumem.</i></p> <p>Annemarie: <i>În biserică ce limbă se vorbea?</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Ăn biserică vlaški, vlaški. Și popa vlaški. Gospod boz... Să vă dea Domnu bun, bun, săldi și lăfea. Și săldi vlaški lefea, că noi Vlasi. Și celo selo era tot... Vlasi.</i></p> <p>Pera: <i>A opet mi ne razumemo ove Vlahe iz Negotina.</i></p> <p>Mircea: <i>A da li razumete Cincare iz Kruševa?</i></p> <p>Pera: <i>I te Cincare ne razumemo. Eto. A nas nazivaju isto Cincari. A ne razumemo. (...) Znači ja se razumem sa ovim Rumunima ovde, u Vršcu se razumem. A sa tim Cincarima i sa tim Vlasima, ne.</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Otišli od tamo... Fuzim di clo și više nu ne turnăm ăn, ăn nostru cătun. Jer nostru cătun cân viñiră partizañi și nemții și bugarii ei nă useliră ăn grat. Ne na ei, nego că să nu ne rănim partizañi, să nu le dăm păne la partizan</i></p>	<p>born in 1925. (...) We would go to school. To learn Serbian. But with the people, with our folks we would speak only Vlach. (...)</p> <p>Pera: I believe that those who were there were shepherds. We should have been called Romanians, not Vlachs. Because we are... If you understand Romanian, you cannot be German. Do you see how similar it is? This was a tribe which was, who knows, moved together with their herds or under some sort of pressure. Well, now, that accent, like in Leskovac or in the South... We speak more with t and l. These are the differences. It means we are Romanians by origin, even if some say Cincars, Vlachs, a lot of names, but it's not important.</p> <p>Mircea: Do you speak the language?</p> <p>Pera: I understand it and speak it, but I don't have anybody to speak it to.</p> <p>Annemarie: Do you understand Romanians here in Banat?</p> <p>Pera: I do. Do you know how? When I went to the school in Vršac. There is a village, Markovac. And I understood everything they were talking about. In the bus. But I didn't use the language. I can understand them even now.</p> <p>Annemarie: What language did you use in church?</p> <p>Kristina: In church, Vlach. And the priest, also. Holy God... Should God give you good things, he would talk like this. Everything in Vlach. The entire village was Vlach.</p> <p>Pera: But we don't understand Vlachs from Negotin.</p> <p>Mircea: Do you understand Cincars from Kruševo?</p> <p>Pera: No, we don't. But we are also called Cincars. But we don't understand them. (...) I understand these Romanians here, in Vršac. But Cincars and Vlachs, no.</p> <p>Kristina: We left there and didn't go back to our village. When Partizans and Germans and Bulgarians came to our village, they moved us to town. So that we don't feed the</p>
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și nă puturiră din nostru cătun, din Uma. Ne puturiră di clo, puturiră moșii, *moji roditelji*, ă n Ghivgheliia. Ă n Ghivgheliia veni. Care-ve pare iș cumpără... cumpărără *stan*, iș cumpără casă. Cari-ve *imanje* multă o vindu *imanja* și-șă dărară *odma*-n casă-clo, ă n Ghivgheliia. Ă n *grat*. A țe nemții când viniră și bugarii tunțea ne putăriră noi din cătun, că să nu ni rănim partizani. Să nu le dăm păne la partizani. Căț eram și în *šume*... *Šume*-avem în nostru cătun. (...) Ă n munti, ă n peșteri. *Ovako*. Noi clăghiiam. Noi nădiiam dintru dedu, babe, *to je bilo staro*. Ali posle când viniră ței ne uselim în *grat*. Se useliră. Noi care-vem *nek* școlă, *ama* școlă păn di patru ani-ra, școlă păn di opt-ra, *ali* noi săldi patru ani am vițat. *Prvi, drugi, treći i četvrti*.

Annemarie: Școala era în cătun, în Uma?

Kristina: Ă n Uma. *Velikā* școlă-vem. Și mult voiniț ave clo ți. Voiscă multă-ve căț era granița. Ve și cărăulă îi zițeau, cărăulă. *Na granicu*. Noi vedeam Grci că n sirbeau și noi că n sirbeam la gru. Ne vedeam, a nu ne lăfem. Nu dădeau, voiscă era, toată granița era voiscă. Voiscă. Voiniț.

Annemarie: *Niste se vratili u Umu...*

Kristina: *Vratili smo se da vidimo ruševinu. Već rau căzute casili.*

Annemarie: Când ați fost?

Pera: *Osamdeset druge.*

Kristina: *Tu smo išli u gosti. Tako, samo da vidimo di smo se rodili. (...) Al' za život, nu. Ghiiu săldi care rămasi stocă si modrească niște moșu lumi. Moșu lumi cari rau, ței rămasără în ța l cătun, nutreau stocă. Ali moșu lumi. A mlad, toț fuziră. Să disfesiră ă n *grat* si...*

Pera: *Sad prave vikendice tamo. Vračaju se na svoje posede. Planina je lepa i čista.*

Kristina: *I ima... Are apu bună, apu are bună, *cesme*, *jako* bun. Vali, nă duțeam la vali și li spelam lucrurli, la vali, cu măgarii (...). Și nă duțeam... a me mamă, și nă duțeam la țe va le și le spelau. Toate lucrărli clo și cazan purtau. Apu erbeau tri se speală*

Partizans, not to give them bread, and they chased us from our village, from Huma. They chased us away, old people, my parents, to Gevgelija. They arrived in Gevgelija. Who had money, bought appartments, houses. Who had property, sold it and immediately built houses in Gevgelija. In the city. When the Germans and Bulgarians came, they chased us away from our village, so that we don't feed the Partizans. Not to give them bread. We were in the woods... We had woods in our village. (...) In the mountains, in the caves. Like this. (...) But after that, when they came, we moved to town. They moved. Who had some school, there was only primary school, with four grades, until the eigth grade, but we only graduated four. The first, second, third and fourth.

Annemarie: Was the school in your village, in Huma?

Kristina: Yes. We had a big school. And there were a lot of soldiers. There was a lot of army, because the border was there. And there was the barrack, it was called like this. On the border. We would see the Greeks sowing on the other side, and they would see us. We could see each other, but we didn't speak to each other. They wouldn't let us, all over the border there was the army. The army. The soldiers.

Annemarie: You didn't return to Huma...

Kristina: We returned to see the ruins. The houses were already ruined.

Annemarie: When did you go there?

Pera: 1982.

Kristina: We went there as guests. Only to see where we were born. (...) But not to live there. There were only cattle and some old people to take care of it. The old people remained there, in the village, to look after the cattle. But only the eldest. The young ones left. They moved to town.

Pera: Now they build vacation houses there. They go back to their properties. The

lucrării. Și cîm le spelau le șterneau pristi
iarbă, pristi rîp și uscă le dunau și le duțeau
acas. Și făceau.

mountain is beautiful and clean.

Kristina: And the water is good, the springs
are good. We would go to the valley to wash
our things, with the donkeys (...). We would go
with my mom to the valley to wash things.
They would carry all the clothes and a
cauldron. They would boil water to wash the
clothes. And when they washed them, they
would spread them on the grass, on the cliff
to dry off, pick them up and carry them home.
They did it like this.



Transcript 2. “They were Djošević, when the Serbs ruled, then they were Djošev, when the Bulgarians came to power, and when the Macedonians took over, they became Djoševski.”

<p>Kristina: <i>Ali noi știi cȃn nȃ upoznȃim cu Blagoje? Blagoje se zove, Blagoje e nume. Cȃn nȃ duțeam la scȃliu, la țȃl scȃliu. Prvi, drugi, treći i četvrti. Și de-tunțea noi nȃ upoznȃim și noi...</i></p> <p>Pera: <i>Ljubav na prvi pogled.</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Și nȃ pisȃiam cȃrțfi. Nȃ trimeteam cȃrțfi. Nȃ pisȃiam: Ljubavni, ne, io te voi p' tine și io rȃmȃn, nu ies, ni la igrancȃ nu mi duc, cȃ acu nu-i el casȃ. Nu mi duc la igrancȃ, cȃ nu-i Blagoje casȃ.</i></p> <p>Annemarie: <i>Na kom jeziku ste pisali pisma?</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Tunțea? Na srpski. A i vlaški imam što sam pisala. Ovako vlaški: Cȃ io nu ies, ljubav, cȃ io t-štept p' tine, cȃ, ovaj, toate mele soațȃ ies la igrancȃ, a io nu ies dintru tine, cȃ nu viȃ tu. Tȃt lucru nȃ pisȃiam. Misliš da știam mai bun? Nu știam mai bun. Țe știam. Četvrti razred sam završila.</i></p> <p>Pera: <i>Znaš kako? Njima ko je dolazio, tako im je menjao jezik. Jednom su bili Djošević, kad su Srbi bili, pa su bili Djošev kad su Bugari bili, a Djoševski kad su Makedonci došli.</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Sad ni makedonci nu știu ici makedonski sȃ lȃfesc. Nu știu pravo makedonski. Io știu srpski sȃ lȃfesc i to se razume, makedonski i srpski jezik.</i></p> <p>Blagoje: <i>A ti znaš makedonski?</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Ma știu si ȃnțeleg, cum nu știu? Știu! Cum nȃ lȃfesc ei, eu potrvdesc și știu.</i></p> <p>Anemarie: <i>A grčki, ne.</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>A, grčki uopște. Noi nu-nvițam grčki uopște. Nu nȃ duțem, nu nȃ dȃdeau ȃn Grčki sȃ nȃ duțem, tu era strogo granița. La granițȃ, Bože. Ș-avem multȃ voiscȃ-clo, ȃn noastrȃ... cȃtun. Veu cȃsarnȃ velicȃ dȃratȃ. Granițȃ, a cȃsarnȃ ȃi zițeau țeli casili buni. Casi buni veu ei.</i></p> <p>Mircea: <i>E, sad, kad ste došli ovde u</i></p>	<p>Kristina: Do you know when we met Blagoje? Blagoje is his name. When we went to school. The first, second, third and fourth grades. And then we met...</p> <p>Pera: Love at first sight.</p> <p>Kristina: And we would write letters. We would send letters to each other. We would write: My love, I love you and I'm here to stay, I won't even go dancing, as he is not at home. I won't go dancing, as Blagoje is not at home.</p> <p>Annemarie: What language did you write letters in?</p> <p>Kristina: Back then? In Serbian. And also in Vlach. In Vlach like this: I won't go, as I'm waiting for you, all my friends go dancing, except for me, because of you, until you return. We would write everything. Do you think we knew better? We didn't. What did we know? I only finished four grades of school.</p> <p>Pera: You know what? Whoever came to rule, they would change the language. They were Djošević, when the Serbs ruled, then they were Djošev, when the Bulgarians came to power, and when the Macedonians took over, they became Djoševski.</p> <p>Kristina: I can't speak Macedonian. Not real Macedonian. I can speak Serbian and then I understand Macedonian.</p> <p>Blagoje: Do you know Macedonian?</p> <p>Kristina: I know and I understand, of course! I know! When they speak, I understand.</p> <p>Anemarie: But no Greek.</p> <p>Kristina: No, no Greek. We didn't learn Greek at all. They wouldn't let us go to Greece, the border was very strict. At the border, my God. And there was a lot of army in our village. They had a big barrack. They</p>
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Guduricu, u Vojvodinu, da li ste na ulici sa vašim sunarodnicima ili u radnji pričali na vlaškom ili na srpskom?

Kristina: *Samo srpski, ča nu štiau toŭ.*

Mircea: *Ali oni koji su znali jezik, kako ste sa njima pričali?*

Kristina: *A, cu ei nă lăfem. Cum noi.*

Mircea: *A kako su drugi gledali na to? Slovenci ili ovi drugi iz Gudurice?*

Kristina: *Štii cum nă ziŭeau? Ţistia lăfesc protiv noi. Znaš kako, neznodno je.*

would call barrack that big house. They had good houses.

Mircea: When you came here to Gudurica, to Vojvodina, did you talk on the street or in the shops, with your countrymen, Vlach or Serbian?

Kristina: Only Serbian, because not all of them could speak Vlach.

Mircea: But how did you speak with the ones who knew the language?

Kristina: Well, with them we spoke our language.

Mircea: How did others look upon this? Slovenes or others from Gudurica?

Kristina: Do you know what they said? That we spoke behind their back. You know, it's not comfortable.



Transcript 3. “The English and Germans would buy cheese from Huma.”

<p>Annemarie: La Crăciun ce făceați?</p> <p>Kristina: La Crăciun? Eee, dăram colaci, multu bun colaci dăram. <i>Al'</i> nu cu șacher, <i>nego</i> li dăram <i>ovako</i>. Jungheau capri, <i>ali</i> dă la capri minuțali, iez, iez. Iez junghea și frizeam, cu nu-veam ni frijider. (...) Dăra pastrimă. Pastrimă dîra. Nu ți si zițea? (...) Caș dăram și ăl vindem, ali dărau ăni mari buril'e. Ăni putine. Ăni mari putine dărau caș. Și bătut, și... Țăl bătut era kao cășcaval. A Țăl meko ăl dărau ăni tinichii. Și cărcăceani-ve, a nu-n munte veneau cărcăceanii. A nu știu di erau te cărcăceanii. <i>Da li si ti, Pero, čuo za Karakačane?</i></p> <p>Pera: <i>Nisam. A šta, oni su dolazili da kupe sir?</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>A oni su dolazili sa mazgama, so konji. Pa su kupovali na jedan put puno, puno.</i></p> <p>Blagoje: <i>Pa mi smo jedan red trideset one kante prodali.</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Pa dobro, ali la cărcăceani. La Ței cărcăceani, așa le zițeau. Ței di un veneau? Din Sârbia?</i></p> <p>Blagoje: <i>Ma kakvi din Sârbia! Din Engleska, din Nemačka.</i></p> <p>Kristina: Cărcăceanii? A cu Țe veneau ei? Clo cu Țe se venea? Nu se venea cu kola. <i>Mora</i> cu calu, cu mazga.</p> <p>Blagoje: Noi lă li duțeam dă jos până ei la kola.</p> <p>Pera: <i>Englezi su kupili sir, i Nemci. Pa dobro.</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Jeste. Jer to je bilo pakovano dobro. I vodilo se računa za čistotu, za sve, lepo.</i></p> <p>Annemarie: <i>A to za Božić su dolazili?</i></p> <p>Kristina: <i>Ne za Božić. A la Božić, eee, trețeau ficiori pră la case, minuț ficiori care ram dă la scăliu și care nu ra la scăliu, dă la casă la casă nă duțeam. A cu sicuiu, torba. Il dărau mamele tri ficiori și nă duțeam dă la casă la casă, nă dădeu... E, tăliau Țele</i></p>	<p>Annemarie: What would you do for Christmas?</p> <p>Kristina: For Christmas? Well, we made bread, very good bread. But not with sugar. They would cut goats, not big ones, but baby goats, goatlings. They would cut goatlings and roast them, because we didn't have any fridges. (...) They used to dry salt meat. Wasn't it called like that? (...) We made cheese and sold it, they made it in big barrels. In big barrels they made cheese. And the beaten one was like Cheddar cheese. And the Karakačans would come, but not in the mountain. But I don't know where the Karakačans were from. Pera, have you heard of Karakačans?</p> <p>Pera: I haven't. What, they would come to buy cheese?</p> <p>Kristina: They came on mules, on horses. And they would buy a lot.</p> <p>Blagoje: Once we sold 30 whole buckets.</p> <p>Kristina: Ok, but to Karakačans. They were called like this. Where did they come from? Serbia?</p> <p>Blagoje: What Serbia? From England, from Germany.</p> <p>Kristina: The Karakačans? But how would they come? They couldn't come by car. It must have been by horse, by mule.</p> <p>Blagoje: We would carry it to them, to their cars, down there.</p> <p>Pera: The English and Germans would buy cheese. Well, good.</p> <p>Kristina: Yes. Because it was well packed. And they took good care of hygiene.</p> <p>Annemarie: Would they come for Christmas?</p> <p>Kristina: Not for Christmas. At Christmas, children would go to every house, small children, who went to school, but not only, we would go from house to house. With a bag. Moms would make bags for their children, and then we went from house to</p>
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<p>cobasâțili lunz erau și ele tre să uscă, cum să uscau, tre usc cară știau, și nă tăliau câte un cobasiță și nă dădeau, veu dărată pogace (...), kao krofne, kao pogace. Pogace le zâțea. Etă, și nă dădeau câte ună pogace și culeu căn ra praznicu. Atunțea. Și nă dunam, ne râdem, lele, care-i mai multu, care-i mai mare... (...) <i>E, a znaš šta?</i> Dăram <i>dugačke prčke</i> și ței culeii ai dăram pră țea <i>prčka</i> și la foc ai frizeam. Lele, cât ăra bun! Culei friși!</p>	<p>house, they would give us... They would cut long sausages, they knew how to dry them, they would cut sausages. They had bread (...), like donuts, like bread. They would give us one and one sausage, when there was that holiday. Then. And we gathered and laughed, who's bigger, who has more... (...) And you know what? We made long rods and put the sausages on the road and roasted them on fire. They were so tasty! Roasted sausages!</p>
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Transcript 4. *Kurban* for Blagoje's life

<p>Kristina: Că iviră că Blagoje a murit, noi nă dusim la biserică. El ra la voinic, în partizani. Și nă iviră că ăl tălciră. Ăn Pretvor. Grat Pretvor se zițea, în Makedonija. Ziseră că mult ra, velică tălcire-clo, nemții tălciră partizați. Și ziseră că Blagoje e tălcit. Și meu tată și lu Blagoja tată li lară moaște, două moaște. Și a lu Blagoja tată și meu tată cu două moaște, le împleară de păn, teasără un zuu păn mulierli, și li împleară di săzli, di păn. Di săz rau că li puneau pri cal și la una parte ve tri ce pune păn și la lantă, <i>preko</i> sămar la cal, la mazgă. Și indreasără, trei zâle-rau cu imnare imnau, aclo era <i>borba</i>, ă n Pretvor era țeu multu borbă, talciră partizați, multu talciră. Și z-duseră la <i>grob</i>. <i>Grob do groba</i> ve. Și la niște groburi care știau nume, liu pisăiau la ună <i>drvo</i>, lă înțapau clo, și un lemnu-i puneau și lă pisăiau la țal lemnu <i>ime</i>. La care nu știau, nu știau, la care știau, pisăiau. E, tunțea noi ă n cătunu nostru, a lu Blagoja surori și mama nu era <i>živa</i>, samo tat-su era <i>živ</i>, și dărară lui frate unu, ăl dedi bou un, la biserică. <i>Ali</i> ăl dedi că auzi dă Blagoje că e ghiu, tri toț se-dună să dare un <i>curban</i> să</p>	<p>Kristina: When they announced Blagoje was dead, we went to the church. He was a soldier, a Partizan. And they told us he was killed. In Pretvor. The town of Pretvor, in Macedonia. They said it was a big fight, and the Germans killed the Partizans. And they told us Blagoje was killed. And my father and Blagoje's father took two mules. And they loaded them with bread. The women baked bread one whole day, and they loaded the mules with bread. They put one bag on one side of the mule and the other one on the other. And they travelled three days until they arrived at the battlefield, in Pretvor, there the Partizans were killed. And they went to the grave. Grave by grave. When the name was not known, there was only a piece of wood. When they didn't know the name, they didn't know it, when they knew it, they would write it down on a piece of wood. We, in our village, Blagoje's sisters, his mom was not alive, only his father... One of his brothers gave an ox to the church. But he gave it when he heard that Blagoje was alive. Everyone gathered to have a <i>kurban</i> feast, so people can eat, the</p>
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<p>mancă nărodu, tot cătunu. Să vină la țal bou. Lui frate ăl dedi bou tri Blagoja. Tri să mancă că el <i>časte</i> că frati-su e ghiu. A noi căn nă dusem la biserică, și mânghiri popa cum știa aclo, la un <i>grob</i>, că <i>mlad</i> muri, <i>mlad</i> ăl tălciră, nu ștu cum. Și noi <i>crno</i> purtam pre noi. Și io <i>crno</i>, io eram <i>devojka</i> tunțea, nu eram măritată, <i>nego</i> ram tucmită. <i>Kao verena</i>. Nă duțem la biserică, s-adună ră toată lui familie, ș-ă noastră <i>valjda</i>, și nă ducem la biserică și la grobu una furguliță <i>dugačka</i> pusără și cu un băirac pusără la țal lemnu ca se știe că Blagoja e mort. E, căn uzără că-i ghiu, tunțea-l dedi țal frati-sou bou la biserică, ăl junghiară șă-l gutviră ă n cazane mari că se dună tot cătunu. Ăl nostru cătun căt, Blagoje, ve lume? Un două sute ve, bre.</p>	<p>entire village. To come to that ox. His brother gave the ox for Blagoje. He would celebrate, for his brother was alive. We went to the church, and the priest was talking there, above one grave, that he died young, he was killed young. And we were all in black. Me too, I was a girl, I was not married back then, I was only engaged. We went to the church, all his family and ours, I think, we went to one grave, there they sticked a long pole with a flag on it, to mark Blagoje's grave. When they heard he was alive, then his brother gave an ox to the church, they killed it and boiled it in big cauldrons, the entire village gathered there. How big was our village, Blagoje? Two hundred houses?</p>
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