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THE VLACH FUNERAL LAMENTS – TRADITION REVISITED

Abstract: In the present study I have analyzed three Vlach funeral laments, audio-recorded in 2004, during the fieldtrip to Valakonje, near Boljevac, Serbia. I have taken into discussion the dynamics of the Vlach community and its present state, with the coexistence of conservatism and transformation. The paper focuses on the performer and shows how, in spite of the fact that she is a guest worker, she is a perfect bearer of tradition.

1. The Vlachs – Short History

The Vlach community from Serbia is located in the North-East of the country, on the Serbian side of the Danube, bordering the historical province of Valahia from nowadays Romania. The history of this community is difficult to be sketched and it represents a highly controversial problem both among Romanian and Serbian historians and Vlach activists (Sorescu 2004). Nevertheless, it can be rendered as overlapping of multiple levels: primeval Balkanic roots; old Slavic influences; a long Romanian inhabitation of the region and, starting with the 17th century, successive, but numerous migrations, of different amplitudes, from the regions North to those South of Danube; as well as recent Serbian and Bulgarian influences. The inhabitants of this region are called, in the ethnographic literature, *Țărani* (*countrymen*), respectively *Ungureni* (*Hungarians*), which can be "re-read" as coming from the "Romanian Country", respectively from the "Hungarian lands". They speak two different dialects of the Romanian language: the *Bănățean* dialect and the *Muntean* one, which, however they do not use as written language. Their speech contains many Serbian words and phrases, Serbian being the Vlachs' written language.

2. Conservatism and Transformation

The true "resistance belt" of this community, due to which it managed to survive and to preserve its language and customs, is represented by the system of traditional beliefs. The big community ceremonies, family life

customs – most of all the extremely sophisticated cult of the dead, as form of an absolute attachment to the predecessors – and the spectacular system of oral transmission of the traditional repertoire are real traditional institutions regulating the community life and supporting the re-elaboration of this community's identity. Nevertheless the overrating of these elements led to the fact that, for over a century, the very scarce, but however mentionable researches in the area¹ have described it only as an "ethnographic paradise", as a region where one can still discover interesting and archaic folklore texts, as a "reservation" where things that have been long forgotten elsewhere survived, as a "museum in the open air", administrating itself on its own (Hedeşan 2004).

1.1. Guest Workers

Even if this region is a highly conservative one, its inhabitants have been very mobile for the last fifty years. After the Second World War, large waves of people from the rural areas started migrating to the industrialized regions, but the local industry found itself unable to absorb the surplus of labour from the country. After this "first step" of (internal) migration, the workers, due to the imperfections and flaws of industrialization and to the unstable situation of agriculture, on the one hand, and to the favourable conjuncture of the international labour market, on the other hand, started migrating abroad. Official emigration from socialist Yugoslavia began in 1965, after the government launched a radically liberal reform of the country's economy. Anticipating a sharp increase in unemployment caused by the sudden introduction of a free market, the country's leadership officially accepted the necessity of employment of Yugoslav citizens abroad.

Post-liberalization emigration from Yugoslavia can be divided roughly into three periods. The first substantial wave (1965–1973) was purely labour-oriented and directed towards Western European countries, which recruited workers in order to fill job vacancies in their booming economies. More meager emigration characterizes the following 15 years, until late 1980s. The majority of Yugoslavs who left their home country did so mainly in order to join family members already established abroad. By the end of the 1980s the Yugoslav economy had entered a phase of severe economic crisis. Consequently, the economic motivation to return weakened, whereas the desire to emigrate increased tremendously. In the beginning of the 1990s, political, economic and social collapse of the former Yugoslavia resulted in the exodus of a substantial number of persons (Kogan 2003).

¹ See, for example, Bucuța 1923, Dumitrescu-Jippa and Metea 1943, Petrovici 1942.

Emigration reached exponential rates between 1965 and 1973, the outset of economic crisis in Western Europe. By 1973, the number of Yugoslav citizens in European and overseas countries had grown from a few thousand to almost one and a half million (Schierup and Ålund 1986: 23, Vesić 1978: 10). As far as the percentage of Vlach workers from abroad is concerned, different studies show contradictory figures. While foreign researchers state that the percent of Vlachs working abroad was about four times bigger than that of Serbs², Serbian researchers of the moment, reflecting Yugoslavia's politics from that period, were insisting on the fact that the number of Vlachs in the region and, consequently, working abroad, is insignificant.³

However, Yugoslavia's different ethnic groups of migrants all shared a general historical-structural context of *migrancy*⁴ and the ultimate goal of return and reintegration. But the concrete processes of migrancy among individual groups have varied greatly in relation to socio-professional, cultural and historical factors. With the Vlachs, this mass migration of workers had the fewest traits of emigration – partly because of the considerable investments into the property, household and economy (Marijanović 1981), partly because of the regular return home, at certain, well established dates⁵ – and can also be defined as *return migration*.⁶

² "About 8 per cent of the total population in Wallachian villages were working abroad in 1971 versus 2 per cent in ethnic Serbian villages." (Schierup and Ålund 1986: 48)

³ "Because in Eastern Serbia the Serbs are most numerous, in comparison with other nationalities, we must expect that their percentage in the number of Yugoslavs working abroad is also the biggest. From the total number of people working abroad, the Serbs represent 97% (...). The departure of the Vlachs is not significant and they participate with a little bit more than 1%, which is 468 souls." (Vesić 1978: 115) The author uses the data offered by the Serbian census of 1971.

⁴ "Migrancy" connotes the *continuous processual character of migration* in opposition to the conventional depicting of migration as a definite decision and act; that is, the once and for all passage of the migrant from one type of social system to another. Mayer showed that the various instances usually abstracted from the migration process as a whole – emigration, immigration, integration, remigration, etc. – cannot be studied in isolation from one another. They are inseparable parts of a wider social process, each part of the same contradictory social reality." (Schierup and Ålund 1986: 21)

⁵ "All important *rites of passage* among Wallachian immigrants remained firmly tied to the Yugoslav hinterland. To our knowledge, not a single Wallachian wedding, baptism, burial or *pomana* took place in Scandinavia during the two decades of migrancy." (Schierup and Ålund 1996: 469)

⁶ "*Return migration* is defined as the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle. Migrants returning for a vacation or an extended visit without

Miloš Marjanović, in a paper about Vlach guest workers, analyzes the variety of terms used for addressing the phenomenon of Yugoslav people working abroad: *Jugoslovenski radnici na privremenom radu u inostranstvu* ("Yugoslav citizens temporarily working abroad", the euphemism reflecting Yugoslavia's official policy in the question of international labour migration); the more neutral: *migrants*, *emigrant workers* (when referring to people) or *economical emigration*, *outer work migrations* (when referring to the phenomenon of migration); some terms which are speaking for themselves: *new slaves*, *Europe's pariah*, *niggers of Europe*, *the tenth member of the Europe's economical community*; and two German terms: *Fremdarbeiter* ("foreign workers") and *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers"). As far as this latter term is concerned, the author notes that, in spite of its cynical connotation ("guest usually don't work and if they do they don't clean the streets"), it is now in use both in Germany and in Serbia. In Serbian, the expression *gastarbajtersko selo* is used to refer to the most important structural characteristic of a village (Marjanović 1995: 248).

As two Scandinavian researchers put it (in a study which deals with the formation of a Vlach immigrant ethnic community in Denmark and Sweden and takes into discussion the reasons of obstinately preserving the ethnic identity and traditional customs), "for the vast majority of Wallachians – young and old – the primary point of identification remained the village or the local area of origin in Yugoslavia. One's link to the local microcosm in Yugoslavia would end in the homestead and the house, for the sake of which years of hard work and abstinence in Scandinavia had been sacrificed" (Schierup and Ålund 1996: 468). It is a well known fact that Vlach migrants use most of their savings for investments in huge houses in their villages of origin and in agricultural machines and tools – investments definitely connected to „prestige games" among migrant households, but also representing the justification for emigration: that of conveying a social status that the migrant lacks in his country of adoption.⁷

the intention of remaining at home are generally not defined as return migrants, though in some settings it is difficult to distinguish analytically the migrants returning home for a short visit or seasonally from those who have returned permanently." (Gmelch 1980: 136)

⁷ "Migrant investments in the Wallachian villages of origin are definitely connected to "prestige games" among migrant households. However, the competition for prestige in the local village context cannot be compared with investments for accumulation, or the quest for social status mobility in capitalist industrial society. House building is not primarily a way of showing that one is richer than one's neighbour. It represents the justification for emigration and conveys a social status from which the migrant is alienated in Scandinavia. In the same time, a continued social attachment and loyalty to the community of origin is demonstrated. In this

1.2. *The Cult of the Dead – Pomana and the Laments*

This continued reproduction of the attachment to the hinterland through "investments" is supplemented by ritual and ceremonial practices. All the *rites of passage*, all the important ceremonies in the life cycle of the Vlach immigrants are held within the community, in the native places. From these, the most important by far are the customs connected to the so-called cult of the dead. The Vlach ancestor worship and the very complex cult of the dead roused the interest of generations of researchers, who, with the risk of offering the image of a monovalent culture, focused only on this element, whose spectacular quality is however indisputable⁸. Once the dead departs, the village community, and especially the family of the bereaved, does not break all the connections with her/ him, but continue to cultivate the relationship in a variety of ways. It is believed that the deceased has the same needs in the world beyond as in this world. It is, thus, the duty of the living to make provision for these needs, until the soul establishes itself in the other world. These provisions for the dead are carried out both by Serbs and by Vlachs in North-Eastern Serbia through the practice of *pomana*, a ceremony of remembrance. All food and drink consumed at a *pomana*, as well as the songs, the candles, the flowers, the garden with flowers, are offered to the deceased, in whose honour the ceremony is conducted.⁹ The *pomane* form a cycle performed at certain intervals after death. Among Serbs, this cycle is completed after one year, while among Vlachs, the *pomane* cycle, which has a much greater social importance, is significantly longer: the last *pomana* is held seven years after the day of death. Some commentators concluded that this last *pomana* means breaking of all the connections with the deceased. However, the "contact" with the deceased does never stop:

sense "investments" can be regarded as a sort of "sacrifice" to the community, and social continuity on a par with the huge expensive tombstones and mausoleums which emigrants erect in honour of their dead in their communities of origin." (Schierup and Ålund 1996: 468); "It can be concluded, having in mind the reasons for leaving, that they (the migrations) are first and foremost "prestige migrations", not "existential migrations", meaning that they are, in these fertile regions, some kind of "prestige games". (Marjanović 1995: 249)

⁸ See, for example, Durlić 1995, 1997, Romelić 1996, Zečević 1975, 1978.

⁹ "Not only is it given "de pomana" the specially prepared feasts related to certain established dates, but "the soul" of the deceased is offered almost everything, like, for example: the wheel dancing, the songs, the garden with flowers, the first fruit etc. This is evidence of the persistent concern to assure to the deceased, by means of different ritual acts, the cosines of a life which, according to the traditional beliefs, is totally identical with this one. This life is continued, in almost all of its aspects, in the other world." (Janković 1972)

”(The last *pomana*) only means the closing of the cycle of regular *pomane*, but even after that, with the occasion of every holiday in the family, they (the family) continue to offer food to the dead one. This is done even by granddaughters and great granddaughters, for as long as the memory of the deceased is alive” (Janković 1972: 91).

A very important part of almost every *pomana* are the laments (the Vlachs do not have an equivalent noun; they say *mă cânt* which approximately means ”I’m singing myself”). They can be divided into strict form laments (e.g. *numărătura mare* ”big counting”, *zorile* ”the dawns”, *bradul* ”the fir tree”, *petrecătura* ”the farwell”, *mărturia* ”the testimony”) and improvised laments. Like other poetic folklore forms, the laments are composed of short rhymed lines. The ”language of death” focuses on the physical and emotional movements caused by death and on traveling, as a modality of passing from the world of the death to the one of the living and the other way around. The laments are facilitating the imaginary communication between the deceased and the living. Most of the topics are repeated in all the laments that are sung in every sequence of the funerary ritual, which adds to the general redundancy of the ritual. Some parts of the laments, are temporary and spatially associated with certain ritual acts, like, for example, taking out the coffin from the house or entering the graveyard (Kligman 1998). In the present paper I will focus on the improvised laments sung with the occasion of the last *pomana* – seven years after the death, in a Vlach village from North-Eastern Serbia.

3. Material and Analysis

The present study is based on the audio-recorded material collected during the fieldwork from September 18th 2003 in the Vlach village Valakonje, near Boljevac, Serbia, where we took part to the last *pomana* organized for Stanka Petrović, deceased seven years before.

The organizers of the ceremony were the closest relatives of the deceased – her two sons with their wives and the niece with her husbands – together with some neighbours from the village, mainly old women. One of the sons with his wife lived in the house of his mother, where she died and where *pomana* was going to be held, the other one and his family has been living and working in France for more than fifteen years. I will focus on this latter’s wife, Bosiljka Petrović, the daughter-in-law of the deceased, who represented ”the engine” of the ceremony, taking care that everything is carried on according to the traditional norms and performing, solo or together with the neighbours, the laments, in different moments of *pomana*. Bosiljka Petrović – or Bosa, as everybody called her – was born in 1950 in Valakonje. She left for France in 1985 and, until 2001, she was coming back

to Yugoslavia once a year. From 2001, when her father got sick and died, she has been partly living in France, partly in Serbia, looking after her mother.

3.1. *The Three Laments*

The preparations for the ceremony that lasted until late in the evening started at dawn.

a) The first ritual act of *pomana* was laying the clothes for the deceased in the meadow.¹⁰ Everything must be new – sheets, blankets, pillow, clothes (underwear, skirt, shirt, socks, jacket, scarf, shoes etc), the bag and all the things inside it (mirror, handkerchiefs, hair comb etc). The deceased is metaphorically ”dressed up”. The women first ”make the bed”, then arrange the clothes on the sheets in a way resembling the dressing up of a person: they lay on the underwear and gradually the other clothes: the socks are carefully put in shoes, the sleeves of the shirt are shoved into the sleeves of the jacket and, in the end, the scarf is tied and carefully laid on the pillow, where the head should lay.¹¹ After this, the three women who performed it (Bosa and two old women from the village – Stana Miucić (1928) and Natalija Kerić (1930)) sat down and started to lament, invoking the deceased to come, see the clothes, dress up, meet the family and the neighbours and join them for lunch.¹² This lament lasted 17 minutes and its melodic line changed once.

b) Later, while the women were preparing lunch and the ritual breads for *pomana* and men were frying the pig, Bosa went to the cemetery, to ”give” food and water to the deceased. This was the second very important moment of the ritual, accompanied by Bosa’s solo lament, which was approximately 10 minutes long. This was the shortest of the three, but it must be taken into account that she is the only one singing alone, which is much more demanding, due to the difficulty of the melodic line.

c) After this, while part of the women were still in the house, preparing *pomana*, and part of them outside, arranging the big table and wreathing flowers for *cununa* (”the wreath”) that was going to be put at the end of the table, three old women from the village (among whom the two already mentioned, Stana Miucić and Natalija Kerić) were singing the third and last lament of day. It was 45 minutes long and changed its melodic lines two times.

¹⁰ It should have been *slobozîrea apeî* (the ”freeing” of water for the deceased), but it was not performed.

¹¹ In the ame may in which the lament, as a special form of communication, is specific for establishing a dynamic dialogue, the body is an indispensable participant at the cementary.

¹² More about this lament, as well as its transcript in Sorescu Marinković 2004.

(All three laments are attached at the end of the text. The English translation is also offered, on a separate column.)

Slavoljub Gacović, analyzing a wider material, collected with the Vlachs *Ungureni*, divides the free improvisation laments into four categories (Gacović 2000: 11-12):

1) *Lamenting for the deceased (să lălăie dupa-l mort)* – right after the funeral, the close relatives (only women) sing a lament with fixed melody. They are mentioning the most important happenings from the life of the deceased, which they usually witnessed (wedding, building of the house etc).

2) *Singing for the deceased (să cîntă dupa-l mort)* – every woman improvises the melody and lyrics, according to her relation with the deceased. It is not necessary that the lamenting women are relatives with the dead.

3) *Singing at the clothes (cîntatu la Țoale)* – at forty days, half a year, a year and so on, until the seventh year after the funeral, always with the same melody and improvised lyrics.

4) *Singing at the grave (cîntatu la morminți)* – the deceased is called for at *pomana* which is prepared for her/ him at forty days, half a year, a year, until the seventh year, always with the same melody and improvised lyrics.

Gacović's classification is somehow incomplete, because the second category could as well include the last two. On the other hand, the last two are not structurally different. They are, indeed, sung in two different moments of the ritual and some lines are associated with certain acts, but the main motives and the structure are identical.

All of the three laments we are focusing on have more or less the same melodic line and their structure can be sketched as follows:

- a) Introductory formula: the deceased is invoked to wake up/ come to the world of the living.
- b) The lamenters beg her to talk to them or tell her to come "on their voice".
- c) The dead is invited to join them for lunch/ dinner or to see the clothes they prepared for her.
- d) People who came at *pomana* are enumerated – relatives and neighbours.
- e) The deceased is asked to walk and talk with the beloved ones.
- f) Ending formula: the lamenters offer as *pomana* their song.

The comparison between the three laments sung during *pomana* does not reveal important structural differences. The three laments are very similar, structurally and melodically speaking.

3.2. Women – Bearers of Tradition

The Russian folklore school has elaborated a series of well-documented studies on the role of women as preservers and transmitters of customs and beliefs in the traditional communities, as well as on the differences between women and men folklore.¹³ Nevertheless it is common knowledge that one of the main roles of women in traditional communities is exactly this: bearers of tradition. „Tradition is a temporal concept, inherently tangled with the past, the future, with history” (Glassie 1995: 396) and it encompasses the whole series of customs, legends, beliefs, ritual acts and behaviours and magic that are handed down from generation to generation, often by word of mouth or by example.

In the Vlach communities this seems to be truer than anywhere else. Here, women are ”the most important *bearers of ideology* (...): it is women who pass on magical practices, cults and mythology, knowledge of traditional herbal medicine and other types of curative techniques for the body and the mind. Women can be an evil ”*vraj*” (witch), who destroys marriages or call down misery on a family; they can also be the ”good” or ”white” ”*vraj*”, who can help a fellow sister to bring back her infidel husband, restore harmony in a household, or bring a vampire to a proper rest in the grave” (Schierup and Ålund 1986: 156). This, correlated to the special type of family and household of the Vlachs – which contrasts with the predominant system in the Balkans in which households are basic social units centered on the man, male inheritance and control through principles of patrilinear descent – gives the Vlach women an overwhelming role, both in society, and in preserving of tradition.

As far as magic practices with the Vlachs are concerned, there are series of strictly feminine rituals. We can mention, from the yearly cycle rituals, *Lăzărița* (which takes place before Easter and is performed by little girls who are dancing and older women who are singing) and *Paparudele* (ritual of invoking the rain, performed by young unmarried girls). With the Vlachs, as well as with other people, charms are a typically feminine genre¹⁴, created by women and reflecting a feminine semantic universe, centered on female identity, occupations, values and actions.¹⁵ It is very important

¹³ See, for example, Adonyeva 1998, or Inna Veselova, *Men and Women tell stories: supervision above types of speech behaviour*, Irina A. Rayumova, *Male and female biographies as a constructive part of the Family Oral History* (www.ruthenia.ru/folklore).

¹⁴ ”Connected to the performance of magical messages, the typical and most frequent situation is that of the specialized feminine role.” (Coatu 1998: 41)

¹⁵ See Golopenția 1998 for a gender analysis of Romanian love charms.

to notice that female "shamanism" was also encountered with the Vlachs of this region and has been practiced until recently. As for the rituals of the life cycle, the child birth is an exclusively feminine ceremony, the midwife (*moaşa*) playing a very important role both in helping with delivery and in the social life of the village. Old women in general are the fittest to perform ritual and magic acts.¹⁶ During the burial and after that, with the occasion of *pomane*, it is also women who organize and perform the ritual acts and, most important, who actualize the magic text – singing for the deceased.

Bosa, despite her being abroad for so long, is definitely a genuine bearer of tradition. Apart from organizing this very important *pomana*, her singing alone in the graveyard is the ultimate trial in terms of proving her knowledge of traditional norms.

3.3. *Improvisation and Rule*

Pomana is a very strict ritual, which has a clearly determined organization. The laments that are performed during *pomana* belong to the sphere of magic texts. This means they have a very precise structure and they function only if this structure is obeyed (just like the charms). Even if they have been classified as free improvisation laments, the improvisation refers only to the parts that make reference to the life of the deceased and to the family that gathered for *pomana*. The three laments represent a set of variants, from the large corpus of laments, not new individual creations. Not respecting the norms of the traditional system of laments has, as a result, the canceling of the magic force of the lament. What seems to be improvisation is nothing but a very good knowledge of the corpus of laments, of the existing variants and of the rules that coordinate the functioning of these discourses. You cannot "improvise" unless you know the rule. You cannot choose from the numerous variants the one that perfectly fits in the given situation if you are not a keen preserver and transmitter of tradition, which Bosa definitely is. If the first lament is sung together with the other two women, who act as "controllers" of the text, she performs the second one alone, producing a perfectly functional text.

3.4. *Tradition and Language – an Obituary?*

Teaching is so fundamental to the function and process of folklore that tradition cannot exist without it. Tradition bearers must be master

¹⁶ "Old woman – For the magic lexicon, this is a fundamental term, which denotes, in fact, the best known performer on the traditional field." (Bălţeanu 2003: 27)

teachers in order to ensure the continuity of their knowledge, which they usually transmit to their children or grandchildren. Bosa is a perfect teacher, but in a quite atypical situation for the conservative communities. She is transmitting her knowledge to her daughter, who has spent most of her life in France and who is no longer proficient in the local idiom. Furthermore, her daughter has a double perspective and role, during the ceremony: she is both the French researcher, who came to study Vlach customs and to audio-record the Vlach idiom, and the youngest woman in the Vlach family, to whom the knowledge must be passed. But, while Bosa's return to the native land is possible, her daughter will most probably never return for good or pass on the knowledge she inherited. So, even if tradition is still alive, Bosa seems to be the last real bearer in the family.

It has been written that, when a community moves to some other place, its members are slowly losing their cultural identity. They take on the language of the new place, to various degrees, and their original language cannot usually resist more than one generation (Kristal 2003: 106). Within a generation – sometimes even within a decade – a healthy bilingualism within a family can slip into a self-conscious semilingualism, and thence into a monolingualism which places that language one step nearer to extinction. American sociolinguist Joshua Fishman once referred to this state of affairs as the "folklorization of a language" – the use of an indigenous language only in irrelevant or unimportant domains (Kristal 2003: 117). Thus the language becomes a form of behaviour familiar only to the enthusiast, the specialist, and the seeker after curiosities.

But what can be said about tradition? The tradition of a community which loses its language is also dying. There is an indestructible connection between these two. However, the way languages die is different from the way traditions die. There are other factors and patterns involved in the two processes. It is impossible to determine a chronology of obsolescence of language and tradition. However, for the sake of parallelism, we can use the expression "folklorization of tradition" to denote the erosion of the original role and value of tradition.¹⁷ In our situation, tradition will be preserved (like the language), but in a highly intentional manner, with the help of the latest technologies, and not by passing it on, orally, from generation to generation. This, however, might prove to be a source of revitalizing tradition in the modern world.

¹⁷ Ilić was proposing the introduction of the expression *culture shift* to parallel the sociolinguistic term *language shift* for denoting "the process of big pragmatic and cultural changes the traditional culture is subject to, under the influence of global civilization modifications, as well as the process of dying of a specific system of traditional cultural norms." (Ilić 2005)

So, Bosa's performance and her daughter taping it might be an emblematic image for the traditional communities facing the challenges of the new millennium. Even if folklorization of tradition seems to be imminent, this is by far an obituary. For a community which does not have a written language, preserving its corpus of customs and ritual, in this "high-tech" form, for the generations to come, is an incommensurable gain.

4. Conclusions

So far, the researches of the Vlachs from Northeastern Serbia have been oriented in two main directions: on the one hand, on the traditionalism and conservatism of this community (mainly on the very complex and unique cult of the dead) and, on the other hand, on their extraordinary mobility outside the borders of the country (as guest workers in different Western European countries). The researchers who focused on traditionalism were mainly ethnologists and folklorists and they talked about the area as a true "ethnographic paradise", where you can still discover interesting and archaic folklore texts. However, they were not interested in the informers, their personal perception and background. The researchers who investigated the phenomenon of work or economic migration with the Vlachs were mainly sociologists and they took a great interest in the relations within the sub-communities from the host countries, between younger and older generations, the investments in the hinterland and the subsequent "prestige games". As far as tradition is concerned, the two things always emphasized were the fact that the Vlach guest workers are keeping and performing their customs in the host countries and that, when back in the villages of origin, they want to impress by the huge quantities of food exhibited and consumed at weddings or baptizing and by the immense dowries. Until now, the connection between the guest workers and the folklore texts – their personal perception, methods of transmitting the text, modalities of performing the ritual and differences of perception between the guest workers and other members of the community – was insufficiently researched.

In the present paper I have tried to approach the Vlach funeral laments comparing a set of three laments performed during the seventh *pomana* by a group of villagers and a woman from the same community who has been living and working in France for more years. The comparison rendered evident that, apart from some small differences, all the three laments have the same structure. In spite of the fact that she has been a "Gastarbeiter" for almost ten years, Bosa is a perfect bearer of tradition and a master teacher. The study also takes into discussion the problems that the Vlach community is facing in the new millennium, in terms of transmitting its folklore and tradition, and suggests that "folklorization of tradition" might

prove to be an acceptable means of preserving the corpus of knowledge for the generations to come.

However, this is only one of the possible approaches. Due to the fact that the material collected at this *pomana* is quite impressive, both in terms of quantity and quality of information, the researcher can also focus, in a future study, on the ritual as a whole, on the context of the folklore text or on the meta-textual comments of the informers.

The first lament

Vii, névastă, vino, vii, névastă, vin-u Vino biñşoru, vino biñşoru Vino pîn la noi-u He-e-ha-ha	Come, wife, come, come, wife, come Come softly, come softly Come to us
Că e vrëmëa bună, că e vrëmëa bun-u Bun de preumblatu, bun de preumblatu Pe unde-ai umblat-u He-e-ha-ha	Because the weather is good, the weather is good Good for taking a walk, good for tak- ing a walk Where you used to walk
Că-ţ va fi măi doru, că-ţ va fi măi dor-u Să m'ergi pin oboru, să m'ergi pin oboru Vii, névastă, vin-u He-e-ha-ha	You must be longing, you must be longing for A walk in the yard, a walk in the yard Come, wife, come
Pe-al nostru glăscioru, pe-al nostru glăscior-u Pe car'-ai doritu, pe car'-ai doritu Ele �-a v'eni�-u He-e-ha-ha	On our voice, on our voice The ones you wished, the ones you wished They came for you
Că le par� r�u, c� le par� r�u-u Da măi mult l'-e doru, da măi mult l'-e doru Vii, névastă, vin-u He-e-ha-ha	Because they suffer, because they suffer But they are longing more, but they are longing more Come, wife, come
V'in la preme�ele, v'in la preme�el-u S� ce-mbraş �n ele, s� ce-mbraş �n ele �i s� ne preumbl�m-u He-e-ha-ha	Come to the clothes, come to the clothes To dress them up, to dress them up And to take a walk together
C� şciu c� �-� doru, c� şciu c� �-� dor-u Au de preumblatu, au de preumblatu	Because I know you're longing, I know you're longing

Pi la f'emeli-iu He-e-ha-ha	For a walk, for a walk To the family
Vii, nevastă, Stanko, vii, nevastă, Stank-u Vino biñşoru, vino biñşoru Şi tună-n obor-u He-e-ha-ha	Come, wife Stanka, come, wife Stanka Come softly, come softly And enter in the yard
Că noi ce-aşceptăm-u, că noi ce- aşceptăm-u D'e prinzî făsemu, d'e prinzî făsemu În drum tot r-uităm-u He-e-ha-ha	Because we are waiting for you, we are waiting for you Cooking lunch, cooking lunch Keep looking on the road
Doru vei v'ėnir'e, doru vei v'ėnir-u Toţu să prinzimu, toţu să prinzimu La zbor să r'e dăm-u He-e-ha-ha	Hoping you would show up, hoping you would show up To have lunch together, to have lunch together And start talking
Mult să ce-ntr'ebăm-u, mult să ce- ntr'ebăm-u Şe trai ai aflatu, şe trai ai aflatu D'e baş ŧ-ai muiat-u He-e-ha-ha	To ask you a lot, to ask you a lot What kind of life you found, what kind of life you found That you completely forgot us
Or a gazd-ai aflatu, or a gazd-ai aflat-u Şi mult nu ce lasă, şi mult nu ce lasă Să vii pe la noi-u He-e-ha-ha	Or you found a husband, or you found a husband And he's not letting you, and he's not letting you Come to us
Roagă pr'e milosu, roagă-ce milos-u Zi, nevast-aşa-r'e, zi, nevast-aşa-r'e Multu m-aş rugar'-u He-e-ha-ha	Ask the Merciful, ask the Merciful Say, wife, like this, say, wife, like this I would kindly ask you
Să mă slobăziţu, să mă slobăziţ-u Să mă ducu-ducu, să mă ducu-ducu Pîn la casa mea-r'u He-e-ha-ha	To set me free, to set me free To go, to go To my house
Caută, mă strigă, caută, mă strig-u Doamne, la pr'emeñele, Doamne, la pr'emeñele, Să ce-mbraş în el-iu He-e-ha-ha	They are looking and calling for me, looking and calling God, to the clothes, God, to the clothes To dress them up

Da mult om aşceptă, da mult om aşcept-u Doamne, şi cu prînz, Doamne, şi cu prînz, Toţu să prînzîm-u He-e-ha-ha	And there are a lot of people waiting, people waiting God, for lunch, God, for lunch To have lunch together
Au cu f'emelia, au cu f'emel'iu Noră din deparce, noră din deparce Doamne, cu nepoat-u He-e-ha-ha	With the family, with the family Daughter-in-law from far away, from far away God, with the niece
C-acum a v'enu, c-acum a v'enu Şi nu vin îndatu Vii, nevestă, vino, vii, nevestă, Stanco, vino biñşoru He-e-ha-ha (Changing of the melodic line) Vino baş de prînz, vino baş de prînz D'e-astară de şin-u	They came now, they came now And won't come back soon Come, wife, come, come, wife Stanka, come softly Come just in time for lunch, just in time for lunch Tonight for dinner
Ia p'e nana S'teva, ia p'e nana S'teva Să vină şi el-u	Take uncle Steva, take uncle Steva So he comes too
Cîta pi la noiu, cîta pi la noiu Au pi la fişior-iu	A little bit to us, a little bit to us Or to his son
Că ştiu că-i e doru, că ştiu că-i e doru A plecat ciñerel-u	Because I know he's longing, I know he's longing He left young
Vii, nevestă, vino, vii, nevestă, vino Vino, nană, vin-u	Come, wife, come, come, wife, come Come, uncle, come
Toţi vă vorbiţu, toţi vă vorbiţu Doamne să veniţ-u	All of you to agree, all of you to agree God, to come
Că sinteţ un cîrdu, că sinteţ un cîrdu Cîrd de f'emeli-u	Because you're a crowd, because you're a crowd Crowd of family
Da iar s-a ruga-r'e, da iar s-a ruga-r'e Bosa ea de cin-iu	But she would ask, but she would ask Bosa would ask you
Să iai tat-al ei, să iai tat-al ei Să vină şi el-u	To take her father, to take her father So he comes too
Pe la casa luy, pe la casa luy Să rămînă-rămîn-u	To his house, to his house To stay

Doamne, domăcino, Doamne, domăcin-u, Bora să să duc-u	God, you host, God, you host Bora to go
La soția luiu, lo soția luiu, La nepoți lui-u	To his wife, to his wife To his grandchildren
Toți vă vorbiți, toți vă vorbiți Doamne, să veniți-u	All of you to agree, all of you to agree God, to come
Strugur'el din vie, strugur'el din vie Proștiță vă fi-u	Dear grape from the vineyard, grape from the vineyard To be for your soul
Glasu nostru voauă, glasu nostru voauă Glăscioru cu gorniu	Our voice to you, our voice to you Our dear voice with the bugle (?)
Vîntu va băceare, vîntu va băceare Glasu va dușear-iu	The wind will blow, the wind will blow And carry the voice
Voi veț ascultare, voi veț ascultar'u Să vă răcoriți-u	You will listen, you will listen To refresh
Pe glas să veniți, pe glas să veniți Cîta pi la noiu.	To come on the voice, to come on the voice A little bit to us.
Uite-așa, glasu și vorbili să fie la nevasta Stanka și la nana St'eva și să fie și la tat-al tău. Să m'eargă cu țoalili. Să fie la fimelie, la toată cari va fi p-lingă ea.	Like this, the voice and the words to be for wife Stanka and uncle Steva and for your father. To go with the clothes. To be for the family, for all the family that is there with her.
The second lament	
Scoală, maică, scoală, scoală, maică, scoală, Scoală binîșoru, scoală binîșor-u Eee-hă-hă	Wake up, mother, wake up, wake up, mother, wake up Wake up softly, wake up softly
Scoal, te pomește, scoal, te pomește Și cu noi vorbiește, și cu noi vorbiește'-e Eee-hă-hă	Wake up, stand up, wake up, stand up And talk to us, and talk to us
P'e drum să plecăm, p'e drum să plecăm Acas-ajunzem-u, acas-ajunzem-u Hăă-lele-hă-hă	Let's leave on the road, let's leave on the road And arrive home, arrive home

<p>Şina să şinămu, şina să şinămu Cu lumëa să vorbimu, cu lumëa să vorbim-u Hää-lele-hă-hă</p>	<p>To have dinner, to have dinner To talk to people, to talk to people</p>
<p>Lăl cu lumëa vie, lăl cu lumëa vie Baş cu fämelië, baş cu fämeli-u Hää-lele-hă-hă</p>	<p>With living people, with living people With the family, with the family</p>
<p>Lăl cu-ai tăi copiu, lăl cu-ai tăi copiu Lălă cu comşiiu, lălă cu comşi-iu Hää-lele-hă-hă</p>	<p>With your children, with your children With the neighbours, with the neigh- bours</p>
<p>Baş cu-ai tăi nepoţu, baş cu-ai tăi nepoţu Lăl cu-ailală toţu, lăl cu-ailălalti toţ-u Hää-hă-hă</p>	<p>With your grandchildren, with your grandchildren With everybody else, with everybody else</p>
<p>Lăl-al tău oboru, lăl-al tău oboru Că şciu că ţ-ă doru, că şciu că ţ-ă dor-u Hää-lălă-hă-hă</p>	<p>In your yard, in your yard Because I know you're longing, I know you're longing</p>
<p>Baş la prăvălie, baş la prăvălie Pl'ină de lume vie, pl'ină de lume vi-u Hää-lălă-hă-hă</p>	<p>In the court, in the court Full of living people, full of living people</p>
<p>L-al'e premeñe'e, l-al'e premeñe'e Să te-mbraş în e'e, să te-mbraş în e'e-e Hää-lălă-hă-hă</p>	<p>At the clothes, at the clothes To dress them up, to dress them up</p>
<p>Ai cu bitu-n mină, ai cu bitu-n mină Baş ca o muiere bătrînă, baş ca o mui- ere bătrînă Hää-lălă-hă-hă</p>	<p>Come with the stick in your hand, the stick in your hand As an old woman, as an old woman</p>
<p>Mîna să ţ-o dămu, mîna să ţ-o dămu, Să te prijunîmu, să te prijunîm-u Hää-lălă-hă-hă</p>	<p>To give you our hand, give you our hand To support you, to support you</p>
<p>P'e scam să şădemu, p'e scam să şădemu Lălă, s-odînimu, lălă s-odînim-u Hää-lălă-hă-hă</p>	<p>To sit on the chair, sit on the chair And have a rest, have a rest</p>
<p>Lălă, masă-nt'insă, lălă, masă-nt'insă Cu lumiñ aprinsă, cu lumiñ aprins-ă Oo-lălă</p>	<p>The laid table, the laid table With burning candles, with burning candles</p>
<p>Baş cu lume ocol'ită, baş cu lume ocol'ită</p>	<p>With nice people, with nice people With the neighbours, with the neigh-</p>

Lălă, cu comșiiu, lălă, cu comșî-iu Hăă-lălă-hă-hă	bours
Lăl, cu femelie, lăl, cu femelie Lăl, cu lumè vie, lăl, cu lumè vie Hăă-lălă-hă-hă	With the family, with the family With living people, with living people
Strugur'el din vie, strugur'el din vie Bogdapros să-ț fie, bogdapros să-ț fi-u Hăă-lălă-hă-hă	Dear grape from the vineyard, grape from the vineyard To be for your soul, to be for your soul
Glasu m'eu țîie, glasu m'eu țîie Lălă, și vorbile, lălă, și vorbil-u Hăă-lălă-hă-hă	My voice to you, my voice to you And the words, and the words

The third lament

Vino, ăi Vino biñisor-u-ăi Vino pîn la noi-u Noi mult așceptăm-u Noi mult așceptăm-u Cunină cu dor-u Să vii pîn la noi-u Toțu să șinăm-u La zbor să ne dăm-u Noi să țe-ntr'ebăm-u Traiu cum trăiești-u Țe șapce an de zil'-u Doamne, a trecut-u Noi nu ne-am văzut-u Pă țîă nu ț-ă dor-u Țe-ai dăio fișori-u Țe doauă nurori-u Țe cîrd de nepoț-u Lor l'-e dor la toț-u Dor și par'e rău-u Țe băbuța lor-u Vii, nevastă, vin-u Vii cu nana Ștev-u Viñiț amîndoi-u Dau la șină cald-u Toțu să șinăm-u Că șciu că v-ă dor-u Rugați-vă voi-u Țe stăpîni vostr-u Doamne, să vă las-u	Come, Come softly Come to us We have been waiting a lot We have been waiting a lot Wreath with longing To come to us To have dinner together To start talking To ask you What's your life like Seven years God, have passed We haven't seen each other Haven't you been longing For your two sons For your two daughters-in-law For your crowd of grandchildren They are all longing And suffering For their granny Come, wife, come Come with uncle Steva Come both of you To the warm dinner To have dinner together Because I know you're longing You ask Your masters God, to let you
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Doamne, într-o sar-u	God, in an evening
Doamne, într-o sar-u	God, in an evening
Ca cucu-ntr-o var-u	Like the cuckoo in a summer
Rugați-vă voi-u	You ask
Doamne, măi milos-u	God the Merciful
De să nu-i mîrie-iu	Not to get angry
Zișeț voi așa-r’iu	Say like this
Ma ducu, ma duc-u	I’m going, I’m going
Pîn la casa mea-r’iu	To my house
Caut că mă strîg-u	They are looking and calling for me
Baş la şină (...)	For dinner (...)
Şina s-o şinăm-u	To have dinner
La zbor să ne dăm-u	To start talking
Că n-e dor la toț-u	Because all of us are longing
Şi noauă şi lor-u	Both we and they
Vii, nevestă, vin-u	Come, wife, come
Vino, nană, vin-u	Come, uncle, come
Viñiț amîndoi-u	Come both of you
Da luvăț cu voi-u	But take with you
Cîrd de f’emeli-iu	The crowd of family
Să vină cu voi-u	To come with you
<i>(Changing of the melodic line)</i>	
Vii, nevestă, vino,	Come, wife, come
Vii, nevestă, vin-u	Come, wife, come
Vino biñișor-u	Come softly
Vino, nu-ț muita-r’e	Come, don’t forget (us)
Vino, nu-ț muita-r’e	Come, don’t forget (us)
Au de bucuva-r’u (?)	(?)
Vin să te-ntr’ebăm-u	Come to ask you
Vin să te-ntr’ebăm-u	Come to ask you
Da ț-a măi tr’ecut-u	If you are better now
C-ai plecat bolnavă	Because you left sick
C-ai plecat bolnav-u	Because you left sick
Doamne-n str’inătat’-u	God, abroad
Vin să te-ntr’ebăm-u	Come to ask you
Vin să te-ntr’ebăm-u	Come to ask you
Doamne, d-ai prim’it-u	God, if you received
Țoale de-mbrăcat-u	Clothes to dress up
Țoale de-mbrăcat-u	Clothes to dress up
Că ce-ai fiimat-u (?)	Did you receive (?)
Apă de spălat-u	Water to wash up
Apă de spălat-u	Water to wash up
Prînzul de prînzit-u	Lunch to eat
<i>(Changing of the melodic line)</i>	
Dauă Stankului	I’m giving to Stanka
Şe noi ne rugăm-u	We are praying
Au că ne-am împreunat-u	Because we all came together
Că ne-am pr’eanat-u	We all came together
Fimel’ia toată	All the family

Fimel'ia toat-u	All the family
Au, bre, Stanko și comșii	Stanka, our neighbour
Bre, Stanko și comșii-u	Stanka, our neighbour
Vino, Stanko, vin-u	Come, Stanka, come
La strîgatu nostru	When we are calling
Au, și la rugatu nostru	And asking
Și la rugatu nostru	And asking
Dauă, Stanko, vodu (?)	I'm giving to Stanka (?)
Da tot nu răspunz-u	But you're still not answering
Au, da Stanka ar răspunde	But Stanka would answer
Stanka ar răspund'-u	Stanka would answer
Numă n-ar de und'-u	Just that she can't
Că s-a depărtat-u	Because she distanced
Au, și s-a înstreinat-u	And became a stranger
Au, și s-a înstreinat-u	And became a stranger
Fă-ce, Stanko, pășăric-u	Stanka, change into a bird
Fă-ce, Stanko, pășăric-u	Stanka, change into a bird
Au, și zboară într-un prun-u	And fly to a plum tree
Au, și zboară într-un prun-u	And fly to a plum tree
Ș-ascultă še io-ț spuñ-u	And listen to what I'm telling you
Ș-ascultă še io-ț spuñ-u	And listen to what I'm telling you
Au, da glasu viu în zăr'-iu	The living voice in the distance
De doru îț va treșea-r'iu	Will cure your longing
De doru îț va treșea-r'iu	Will cure your longing
A, da doru de obor-u	The longing for your yard
Doru de obor-u	The longing for your yard
Și de prăvăli-iu	And for your court
Și de lum'ea vi-iu	And for the living world
Vino, Stanko, biñșor-u	Come, Stanka, softly
Vino, Stanko, biñșor-u	Come, Stanka, softly
Noi grijă să av'em-u	We'll take care
Să ță sprijunăm-u	To support you
Vracnița s-o deșchidem-u	To open the gate for you
Vracnița s-o deșchidem-u	To open the gate for you
Să tuño în obor-u	To enter in the yard
Să tuño în obor-u	To enter in the yard
Au, da de unde ț-ă dor-u	You have been longing for
De unde ț-ă dor-u	You have been longing for
Vîntu va băcea-r'u	The wind will blow
Vîntu va băcea-r'u	The wind will blow
Au, și glasu-l va dușea-r'e	And carry the voice
Glasu va dușea-r'iu	Carry the voice
La ceñe va străbăcea-r'iu	It will reach you
La ceñe va străbăcea-r'iu	It will reach you
Vino, Stanko, vino, Stanko	Come, Stanka, come, Stanka
Vino, nu ñe uita-r'iu	Come, don't forget us
Vino la fișior'-u	Come to your sons
Stanko, la nurori-iu	Stanka, to your daughters-in-law
Au, mai mult la ñepoțai-iu	Or better to your grandchildren

Mai mult la népoțai-iu	Better to your grandchildren
De când tu ai p'lecat-u	Since you left
Au da ei-u né-a cr'escut-u	They've grown up
Da ei né-a cr'escut-u	They've grown up
Car'e s-a însurat-u	Some got married
Da și s-a maritat-u	Some got married
Vino, Stanko, biñșor-u	Come, Stanka, softly
Vino, Stanko, biñșor-u	Come, Stanka, softly
Da când toț ai viđea-r'iu	When you see everybody
D-atunse-ai ocoli-r'iu	You will enjoy it so much (?)
Au de drag n-or măi pucea-r'e	You will be so happy
De drag n-or măi pucea-r'iu	You will be so happy
De mănuța lor-u	Because of their hand
Da și de ei de t'in-u	They will love being with you
Au, da și tu baș de iei-u	And you being with them
Și tu baș de iei-u	And you being with them
Vorb'eșce, au, frumos-u	Talk nicely
Roagă-ce, milos-u	Ask the Merciful
Au, de stăp'inii tăi-u	Or your masters
De stăp'inii tăi-u	Or your masters
Să ce lasă într-o sar-u	To let you one evening
Ca cucu într-o var-u	Like the cuckoo in a summer
Vino, Stanko, biñșor-u	Come, Stanka, softly
Vino, Stanko, biñșor-u	Come, Stanka, softly
Soția, sățoia-iu	Your husband, your husband
Stanko, baș, cu ciñ-iu	Stanka, with you
Au, soție și femeliia	The husband and the family
Soție și f'emeli-iu	The husband and the family
Stanko, pari în jor'-u (?)	Stanka (?)
Au, dă și surătar'-iu	To kiss you
Au, că mult de mult s-a dus-u	Because he left so long ago
De multu s-a dus-u	He left so long ago
Strugur'el dîn vi-iu	Dear grape from the vineyard
Bogdaproș să îți mai fie	To be for your soul
Bogdaproș să-ț fi-iu	To be for your soul
Au, glășșioru dîn obor-u	The dear voice from the yard
De unde ță-mai dor-u	You missed the most
Vino, Stanko, vino, Stanko	Come, Stanka, come, Stanka
Vino, nu né muita-r'iu.	Come, don't forget us

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ВЛАШКЕ ТУЖБАЛИЦЕ – ДРУГИ ПОГЛЕД НА ТРАДИЦИЈА

Резиме

Рад анализира три влашке тужбалице снимљене приликом једног седмогодишњег помена (*помана*) у селу Валакоње у близини Бољевца, Србија, 2004. Размотрена је динамика влашке заједнице и њено садашње стање које карактерише коегзистенција конзервативизма и процеса трансформације. Поред култа мртвих, и данас карактеристичног за влашку културу у Србији, рад фокусира и активну улогу појединца у преношењу традиције. Саговорник на терену, истовремено и извођач тужбалица, показао се као одличан носилац традицијске културе упркос чињеници да дуго низ година живи и ради у Француској као гастарбајтер. У прилогу рада донети су транскрипти анализираних тужбалица.