

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS  
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

LI



2020

# BALCANICA

P. COUNILLON, *L'Istros dans la Géographie de Strabon* · M. VASILJEVIĆ, *Translations of Saints' Relics in the Late Medieval Central Balkans* · V. SIMIĆ, *Popular Piety and the Paper Icons of Zaharija Orfelin* · A. SORESCU-MARINKOVIĆ & M. MIRIĆ & S. ĆIRKOVIĆ, *Assessing Linguistic Vulnerability and Endangerment in Serbia: A Critical Survey of Methodologies and Outcomes* · A. LOUPAS, *Interethnic Rivalries and Bilateral Cooperation: Aspects of Greek-Serbian Relations from the Assassination of Alexander Obrenović to the Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1903–1908)* · V. G. PAVLOVIĆ, *Le révolutionnaire professionnel 1934–1936 Tito à Moscou* · S. G. MARKOVICH, *History of Hellenic-Serbian (Yugoslav) Alliances from Karageorge to the Balkan Pact 1817–1954* · D. GNJATOVIĆ, *Evolution of Economic Thought on Monetary Reform in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after the Great War* · G. LATINOVIĆ & N. OŽEGOVIĆ, *“St. Bartholomew’s Night” of Banja Luka: The Ustasha Crime against the Serbs in the Banja Luka Area on 7 February 1942* · I. VUKADINOVIĆ, *The Shift in Yugoslav-Albanian Relations: The Establishment of Ties between Albania and the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija (1966–1969)* · M. RISTOVIĆ, *Yugoslav-Greek Relations from the End of the Second World War to 1990: Chronology, Phases, Problems and Achievements* ∞

ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

UDC 930.85(4-12)

BELGRADE 2020

ISSN 0350-7653

eISSN 2406-0801



policies of Western countries, including US involvement in the disintegration of Yugoslavia under the veneer of support for multicultural democracies. The outcome was the creation of two EU-financed Western protectorates that can hardly be described as multicultural. The involvement of Western diplomacies is criticized as largely indecisive and insufficiently concerned about its long-term consequences. It is important to know that the book was published a year before the Prespa Agreement (2018) concluded between the governments in Skopje and Athens which settled the issue of the name of Greece's northern neighbour, now known as the Republic of North Macedonia. Can this be described as the "flexible strategy that will not depend entirely on foreign priorities" that Veremis favours, in the conclusion of his book, as the approach to resolving Balkan issues?

The book ends with a "Chronology", a list of the major events that took place between 1774, the year taken as the beginning of the Eastern Question, and 2016, the year of the Brexit referendum which, along with other difficulties of the EU, is seen as a sign of the protracted wait of the rest of the Balkan countries in the antechamber of membership. Some shortcomings of the book include the occasionally imprecise or/and inconsistent spelling of personal and geographic names. The virtual absence of Montenegro is conspicuous. Apart from its role in the Balkan Wars, no further information about it is given. These shortcomings notwithstanding, this book raises a number of interesting questions and offers original interpretations and answers both to students and to professional historians of Balkan history.

THEDE KAHL AND IOANA NECHITI, *THE BOYASH IN HUNGARY. A COMPARATIVE STUDY AMONG THE ARGĒLENI AND MUNČENI COMMUNITIES.*

VIENNA: AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES PRESS, 2019, 235 p.

Reviewed by Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković\*

The Boyash (Bayash) are an ethnic group living today in scattered communities across the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, but also in the Americas. They speak Romanian, preserve the memory of a common traditional occupation (woodwork), and are usually considered Roma by the majority population. The last two decades have seen an explosion of interest in this ethnic group, partly triggered by the publication, in 2005, of the volume *The Bayash in the Balkans. Identity of an Ethnic Community*, by the Institute for Balkan Studies in Belgrade and under the editorship of Biljana Sikimić. Today, researchers already talk about a new emerging discipline, Bayash studies, which has by now gathered an impressive corpus of studies. The present volume, *The Boyash*

*in Hungary. A Comparative Study among the Argēleni and Munčeni Communities*, authored by Thede Kahl and Ioana Nechiti, is a valuable addition to this growing body of study.

The volume, which is the first in the series edited by the Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage Commission of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, is a thorough dialectological and linguistic comparison of the Romanian linguistic varieties spoken by two subgroups of the Boyash in Hungary: *Argēleni* and *Munčeni*. It must be highlighted that the *Argēlean* variety is the one undergoing standardization, as Hungary has

---

\* Institute for Balkan Studies SASA

emerged as the only country which offers education in the language of the Boyash minority group. The volume analyses the two Romanian varieties and their sociolinguistic situation on the basis of field recordings collected between 2010 and 2014 among Boyash speakers in two villages of Southern Hungary, Alsószentmárton and Gilvánfa, and in the city of Pécs.

The book is divided into five main chapters: 1) Introduction; 2) Current state of knowledge; 3) The field research; 4) Corpus: Text examples from the field recordings; and 5) Culture, language, identity.

The first chapter contains a brief introduction to the history of Roma, Boyash and Rudari migration, with a focus on their slavery and serfdom in Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldova, and the extensive sedentarization measures taken in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The authors explain why Hungary occupies a special place in the configuration of Roma communities, which can be divided today into three main linguistic groups: Hungarian-speaking Romungros, Hungarian- and Romani-speaking Vlach Gypsies and Romanian-speaking Boyash, the first being the most numerous (more than 70% of the total Roma population in Hungary) and the last – the least numerous (only 6%). According to Kahl and Nechiti, “the idea that the Boyash are a homogeneous population can no longer be sustained” (p. 12), as they are “miscegenated descendants of the Gypsy miners and gold workers, the sedentary (Romanian) population and escaped state and monastery slaves, although less subject to state laws and probably with the possibility of interethnic marriages” (p. 13). In view of Maria Theresia’s prohibition of marriages within the group, the occurrence of visible signs of miscegenation of the Boyash is hardly surprising, as the authors put it.

The Introduction continues with a historical overview of the Baranya region, and zooms on the Hungarian part of the region, where the communities under scrutiny

live. After 1971, three Boyash subgroups, *Argeleni*, *Munčeni* and *Tiszani*, have formed the majority of Roma in the southern rural areas of Baranya, close to the Croatian border. However, according to recent sociolinguistic research, their Romanian varieties have undergone major and dramatic changes in the last decades, and are today used only functionally, in the private domain and as an affective language.

The second chapter – Current state of knowledge – summarizes the linguistic scholarship on the Boyash in Europe, and the authors rightfully note that, basically, “scholars in Roma studies have no great interest in the Romanian language and experts in Romanian studies none in the language of the Roma” (p. 18). Moreover, they make the daring claim that, “had we been talking about sedentary groups who could not be linked with the Gypsies at all, traditional Romanian dialectology would have taken a greater interest in the language of the Boyash” (p. 18), showing also that the leading compendiums of Romanian dialectology do not even mention the Boyash Romanian varieties. Pointing, though, to notable exceptions of individual scholars devoted to the study of the language and identity of the Boyash, Kahl and Nechiti notice that there are still major gaps in the linguistic knowledge of these archaic Romanian varieties.

The third chapter – The field research – presents the aims and methods of the study, describes the three places under scrutiny, offers details on the interviewees, the phonetic transcription of the recorded material, and presents a large collection of field photographs. Alsószentmárton, a small isolated village of 1,156 residents, is inhabited almost entirely by Boyash, who identify themselves as *Munčeni* and call their language *țigăniv* or *țiginiu*. The second village, Gilvánfa, as opposed to the first, is much smaller (381 inhabitants), but the Boyash there are less isolated from Hungarians. Their language, which they call *l’imbă dă băăș*, is highly endangered, since even the older generation

speak mostly Hungarian. Pécs, the administrative and economic centre of Baranya county, with a total of 156,049 inhabitants, is home to a dispersed Boyash community, and the state of their language is similar to that of the Boyash in Gilvánfa.

The fourth chapter of the book is comprised of a rich corpus of transcribed texts recorded in the abovementioned places, accompanied by an English translation, and grouped according to several topics, such as: origins and history, customs and rituals, fairy tales, linguistic identity, language standardization, and everyday life. The printed edition of the book comes with an enclosed USB card, with the video recordings of the interviews, which can also be found online on the website of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, [www.oeaw.ac.at](http://www.oeaw.ac.at).

The fifth and most consistent chapter of the book – Culture, language, identity – which covers almost 100 pages, makes the core of the volume and offers a thorough sociolinguistic analysis of the presented material. First, the authors delve into the history of the three Boyash settlements, from the beginning of the twentieth century, through the two world wars and the communist regime, up to the present. Second, the authors discuss the rich series of ethnonyms and exonyms of the group, stressing the flexibility of the Boyash in declaring a Roma or Gypsy identity depending on the situation, and the fact that identification with Romanians and their culture exists, although “almost no one calls himself/herself Romanian” (p. 118). As shown further, the Boyash in Hungary do not hold their own language in high regard and many describe it as mangled or inadequate. On the basis of the analysed interviews, the authors discern that a distinct identity is being built, which dissociates between the Boyash and the Roma groups, on the one hand, and between *Arġeleni* and *Munĉeni*, on the other.

The authors notice considerable variations in the way the Boyash varieties are used in Hungary, depending on the distribution

area of the speakers, which justifies the use of the term *idiolects*. Moreover, an important factor for the maintenance of these varieties is the type of settlement the Boyash used to live in. Namely: “Until recently they lived in monolingual, closed societies and so in a context where the learning of another language brought no significant benefit to the community” (p. 126), while today all the Boyash speak the language of the majority population, Hungarian. The authors offer details about the process of standardization of Boyash (establishing a spelling system, publication of the first textbooks, song collections, dictionaries, etc.), and show that the greatest obstacle to standardize these varieties is the opposition of the speakers themselves, who “denounce themselves speaking a language that is neither Romanian, nor Hungarian” (p. 131), coupled with the separate and uncoordinated efforts of the two groups in Baranya. Kahl and Nechiti consider that both varieties are endangered, but while the *Munĉan* variety is assessed as being at stage two of shift on a three-stage process of language extinction, during which “the language of the majority increasingly spreads into the language of minority, while the latter is used mostly within the family by the elderly” (p. 134), the *Arġelean* variety is considered to be at stage three, which is characterized by “the loss of vocabulary and the inability to create new words, as the majority language has definitely replaced the minority language” (p. 134). However, mention is made of the fact that, during the last three decades, the *Arġelean* variety has enjoyed greater prestige than the *Munĉan* and that, if one of the varieties should reverse language shift, it would most probably be the *Arġelean*, which is already used in schools. After a short overview of phenomena of bilingualism and plurilingualism, an exhaustive comparative grammar of the two varieties follows.

In short, *The Boyash in Hungary* is much more than a comparative study among the *Arġeleni* and *Munĉeni* communities, as the

subtitle modestly announces. It is a systematic and comprehensive work which explores issues that go beyond the strict interest of dialectology, uncovering the sophisticated sociolinguistic situation of the Romanian Boyash varieties spoken in Hungary. Apart from the intrinsic value, the volume has a special relevance in that, being written in

English, it helps bridging the knowledge on the Boyash in Europe, as this new discipline has so frequently been hindered by the fact that studies written in national languages of Central and Eastern Europe were not readily available to the entire research community.

YARON MATRAS AND ANTON TENSER, EDs., *THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF ROMANI LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS*. PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2020, 596 p.

*Reviewed by* Mirjana Mirić\* and Svetlana Ćirković\*

The Romani language represents a fascinating object of inquiry within several linguistics disciplines. As it has long been a primarily oral language, without a widely accepted standard, Romani displays a high degree of cross-dialect variation at all levels of linguistic structure, which makes it interesting for descriptive and historical linguistics, as well as dialectology. Given its syntactic structure and “rich inflectional and derivational morphology and a relatively high degree of synthesis” (Elšlík, p. 157), Romani is particularly appealing to researchers taking a typological perspective. Additionally, Romani is suitable for analyses within contact linguistics, being characterized as a language in permanent contact as Romani speakers are at least bilingual and from an early age acquire one or more languages they are in contact with, with Romani bilingualism (or multilingualism) being unidirectional since only rarely do the speakers of the majority languages acquire Romani (Matras & Adamou, p. 329). In this respect, language contact has been an important factor that has shaped the historical development and contemporary state of Romani. From the sociolinguistic perspective, Romani is characterized as a “functionally limited, dominated language” (Halwachs, p. 430), with specific functional distribution of the linguistic repertoires.

Although mainly a spoken language, due to the modern technologies and prolific work of Romani contemporary authors and translations into Romani, this language is gaining new domains of usage in the written form, which triggers research of written practices across various disciplines.

*The Palgrave Handbook of Romani Language and Linguistics* is a breakthrough in contemporary Romani linguistics as it manages to include all the aforementioned topics and disciplines. It offers a unique synthesis of knowledge on the Romani language and linguistics, gathering experts in these fields and encompassing a wide range of theoretical concepts and methods within various disciplines. Relying on relevant literature, the individual contributions make the handbook as a whole quite informative and comprehensive, while accompanied by novel research, theoretical concepts and methodological approaches offer state-of-the-art insight into what constitutes Romani linguistics today. Additionally, the presented analyses are systematic and abundant in (linguistic) details, and the contributions are written in a clear and coherent way.

---

\* Institute for Balkan Studies SASA