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## AROMANIANS IN MACEDONIA BEFORE AND DURING THE BALKAN WARS (IN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES)<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

When it comes to the Aromanians and the Aromanian issue, the diplomatic documentation of various provenances is an important source for reviewing mainly the following aspects:

- The presence of Aromanians in the various ethnic statistical reviews on Macedonia and the Balkans in the period prior to the Balkan Wars;
- The attitude of the Constantinople Patriarchate towards the Aromanians in Macedonia and the activities of the Romanian propaganda;
- The attitude of the other peoples in Macedonia and on the Balkans towards the Aromanians;

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<sup>1</sup> A version of this paper was presented on the International conference „Balkan Entanglements - Peace of Bucharest“, held on 07-08 November in Bucharest, Romania, organized by University in Busharest, Faculty of History, and Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- The Aromanian church-educational issue and the ideas for autonomy.

## THE PRESENCE OF AROMANIANS IN THE VARIOUS ETHNIC STATISTICAL REVIEWS ON MACEDONIA AND THE BALKANS IN THE PERIOD PRIOR TO THE BALKAN WARS

There are a number of statistics on the number of Aromanian population in Macedonia, mainly in the context of the statistics on the population in European Turkey. However, the numbers presented vary depending on the time period in which the statistical data was gathered, and depending on the origins of the author of a particular statistics, as well as on the definition of “Macedonia”. Thus, it is estimated that in the period between 1860–1903 their numbers were greatest in the villayets of Bitola and Thessalonica, while within the Macedonian part of the Kosovo Villayet they were settled mainly in the larger towns as merchants and craftsmen.<sup>2</sup>

One of those statistics refers to the population within the Ottoman villayets on the Balkans at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which contains a number of headings with different ethnic-religious affiliations, the contents of which is completely or partly unclear. In that respect, there is no mention of Macedonians who were, most probably, listed under the heading *Orthodox Bulgarians*, and in that regard the affiliation *Orthodox Turks* is also questionable. As an illustration, in this statistics one finds Muslim Turks, Orthodox Turks, Orthodox Bulgarians, Muslim Bulgarians, as well as Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox population separately, Muslim Albanians, Orthodox

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<sup>2</sup> Никола Минов, *Влашкото прашање и романската пропаганда во Македонија (1860-1903)*, (Скопје: Ламина, 2013), 42.

Albanians, Albanians-Catholics, Muslim Gypsies, just Gypsies, Muslim Serbs, Orthodox Serbs, Orthodox Greeks, Orthodox Vlachs, Jews, and Armenians, and it also contains a number under the heading *mixed race*. For the purpose of this text, we shall present the number of Aromanians as presented in this statistics: 24,970 Aromanians in Thessalonica (Salonika); 64,945 Aromanians in Bitola (Manastir); 10,000 Aromanians in Skadar (Işkodra); and 910 Aromanians in Kosovo (there is no data of Aromanians living in Adrianople and in Yanya).<sup>3</sup>

The notes written by foreign advisor M. Petraiev regarding the nationalities in Macedonia, which in his opinion is more of a political than a geographic term, are particularly interesting for reviewing.<sup>4</sup> He explains that Macedonia encompasses the villayets of Thessalonica and Bitola, and about half of the Kosovo Villayet, and has a population of approximately 2,500,000 people. As regards the ethnic composition of the population, he presents the generally accepted view, supported by the official Turkish statistics as well, that the population is comprised of Turks, Albanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Kutzo-Vlachs, Jews, and Gypsies. But he is of the opinion that if one puts aside the Turks, Jews and Gypsies as elements that have settled there additionally and have kept their individuality, then the rest of the population is a separate, mixed 'Macedonian' type that cannot be placed under the

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<sup>3</sup> Aram Andonyan and Zavren Biberyan (Türkçesi or Turkish translator), *Balkan Harbi Tarihi* (Istanbul: Sander Yayinlari, 1975), 86-87, taken from Edward Erikson, *Defeat in Detail. The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912-1913*, Foreword by Briton C. Busch (Westport, Conecticat - London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), 41.

<sup>4</sup> Notes by the foreign advisor Petriaev regarding the nationalities in Macedonia dated the 17<sup>th</sup> December 1909, created in St Petersburg. Симон Дракул, изб., прев., ред. и ком., *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот (Зборник руска дипломатска документација - 1894-1913)*, седми том 1909, 1910-1913 (Селектор: Скопје, 2007), 61.

heading of any of the known ethnographic groups. Hence, he points out as follows: *“Any designation given to it – Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, and Romanians (Kutzo-Vlachs) – appear solely as political labels imposed to it by the Balkan states neighbouring Macedonia that are in this or that way interested in its fate.”*<sup>5</sup>

Petraiev, giving a historical overview on the creation of this, so called, Macedonian type and the various influences on it (Roman, Greek-Byzantine, Slavic), also presents some partly or fully arbitrary statements. Thus, he states that the language spoken by the Albanians should be included in the group of Romanian dialects because it contains a large number of words with Latin roots. He also states the following: *“The Kutzo-Vlachs, scattered throughout Macedonia in not so large groups, are closely related to the Albanians. Romanians, and nowadays the Italians as well, carry out an intensified propaganda among the Kutzo-Vlachs and the Macedonian Albanians, considering them to be their kin in language and in tribal origin.”*<sup>6</sup>

The Russian Consul Kalj addresses more specifically the population in one of the villayets on the territory of Macedonia; he sends a short review to the First Department under the title “Statistical and Ethnographic Accounts on the Population in the Villayet of Bitola”, dated the 19<sup>th</sup> February 1910.<sup>7</sup> He stresses that he wrote it after the secret address of the Department on the 5<sup>th</sup> November the previous (1909) year. He also underlines that presenting *“impartial ethnographic and statistical data on the numbers, the tribal, and religious affiliations of the population in the district”* is not at all an easy task. According to him, this is due to several reasons, one being the fact that

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<sup>5</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 62.

<sup>6</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 62–63.

<sup>7</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 95.

the official Turkish statistical data are utterly incorrect and incomplete because the Young Turk authorities, amongst other things, usually manipulated the figures regarding the presence of the Turkish element on account of the number of Christians, so as to benefit in the elections.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, he explains why one cannot rely on the data provided by the authors who research that subject matter. In that respect, he states the following:

*“Most of the authors that are researching the ethnography of Macedonia and are trying to present tables of its population, belong to the nationalities and are interested in one of the existing propagandas; such is the case with: the Bulgarians – Shopov, Brankov, Knchev, Ishirkov; the Serbians – Cvijich, Ivanich, Gopchevich; the Greeks – Nikolaidis, Kazasis; the Romanians – Margariti, Duma, Diamandi; and others...”*<sup>9</sup>

Hence, according to him, the most impartial work in this regard is the ethnographic table of the population containing data gathered by his predecessor, the Consul A. A. Rostkovsky in 1897.<sup>10</sup> Elaborating on the sources and the principle on the basis of which Rostkovsky had gathered the material, Kalj states again that despite *“the numerous new printed works about Macedonia that have appeared since then, the best statistics on the population in the Villayet of Bitola”*<sup>11</sup> is no other than the one gathered by his

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<sup>8</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 96.

<sup>9</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 97.

<sup>10</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 97.

<sup>11</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 98.

predecessor. In that table, which does not contain a heading for *Macedonians*, the number of Aromanians is 59,000.

Besides this statistics, the Consul Kalj encloses another one as well, which contains the population's own feeling of national affiliation. This table shows serious discrepancies with respect to that by Rostkovsky, which is due to the national determination of people according to their affiliation with different church institutions. Thus, amongst other things, Kalj points out that "36,500 Aromanians, devotees of the Patriarchate, call themselves Greeks". Interpreting this occurrence, Kalj concludes the following:

*"If all nationalities that live in Macedonia were aware of their own nationality, and if the ethnographic numbers matched the numbers of their own national affiliations, then this fierce battle between them, which forces the Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbs to lure the Slavs on their own side, would not exist and the Romanian and Albanian propagandas, the purpose of which is to develop the awareness of their own nationality in Aromanians and Albanians-Christians and tear them away from the Greeks, would not exist either."*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 99. Regarding this, we must emphasise that often there are ethnonyms used in documents from various provenance that should be carefully interpreted. In that respect, just a small number of people of Greek ethnic origins should be considered as 'Greeks', because this term refers much more to the adherents of the patriarchate belonging to the Orthodox Christian population as a whole (Macedonians, Aromanians and Albanians). In that respect, one should also bear in mind that the ethnonyms Serbs and especially Bulgarians, which are used to name the ethnic Macedonians, is a common practise in various sources and not just the Russian diplomatic documentation. That

## THE ATTITUDE OF THE CONSTANTINOPLE PATRIARCHATE TOWARDS THE AROMANIANS IN MACEDONIA AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ROMANIAN PROPAGANDA

The above introduces us directly into the issue concerning the attitude of the Constantinople Patriarchate towards the Aromanians in Macedonia and the activities of the Romanian propaganda. In that respect, we shall focus on the Consul Kalj's perception who points out that the Greek Patriarchate, positioning itself as the patron of all Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire, was the only one, throughout the centuries, that had the right to set up its own churches and schools. He emphasizes: *"Liturgies and classes in the schools were conducted in Greek language and the entire Christian population, no matter which nationality it belonged to, was considered as being 'Rum' by the Turkish authorities, which later became a synonym for the word 'Greek'."*<sup>13</sup> The Consul states that the Greek spiritual leadership exhibits a hostile attitude not only towards the "Bulgarians" and the "Serbians", but also *"towards the Orthodox Aromanians and Albanians who, recognising the Patriarchate, persist in demanding that the Patriarchate lets them have liturgies in their folk and, for them, comprehensible language"*.<sup>14</sup>

The Russian diplomat explains why he focuses in great detail on the role of the Patriarchate in Macedonia – namely *"to explain the existence of so*

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is why the analysis made by the Consul Kalj and his perceptions which are presented further on in the text, are of particular significance for an objective analysis of the issue regarding the ethnic composition of the population in Macedonia and throughout the Balkans.

<sup>13</sup> Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 107.

<sup>14</sup> Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 108.

*many Greeks who, considering their origins, belong to other nationalities, and who do not know a single Greek word and yet think of themselves as Greeks*".<sup>15</sup>

In fact, in the said document, the Consul Kalj focuses on each nationality separately, which in the Villayet of Bitola are, as he names them, Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Slavs, Aromanians and Jews. He does not present this overview just from the aspect of the current moment, or from the point of view of a person well acquainted with the current events, but he also presents it in a historical context, and with the aim to shed some light on the implications regarding the contemporary positions and relations within Macedonia and on the Balkans in general. So, addressing the theories on the origins of the Aromanians, he also says the following: *"Throughout the history, Aromanians were left entirely in the hands of oblivion, they never played any special role; however, thanks to their noticeable agility, they still managed, despite being scattered, to maintain their nationality and language."*<sup>16</sup> The Consul points to the Hellenisation as the main hindrance for raising the national awareness and the affirmation of the Macedonian Aromanians. In that respect, he explains that from a typically nomadic people at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *"today"* they are differentiated into two strictly distinguished groups – Aromanians-merchants and Aromanians-herdsmen. Furthermore, he continues, the members of the former group, mostly city population, *"are completely Hellenised and present themselves as being more fanatic than the Greeks themselves"*.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the Aromanians-herdsmen kept all of the particularities of the nomadic way of

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<sup>15</sup> Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 108.

<sup>16</sup> Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 109.

<sup>17</sup> Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 109.



life, that also includes a certain degree of isolation, which is the reason why the acceptance of Greek is not as noticeable as with the city population. It is also important to note Kalj's statements that their wives speak only "in Vlach", as well as the fact that with these Aromanians "that fanaticism with Hellenisation is not so noticeable".<sup>18</sup> In fact, the Consul here notes an occurrence known as social stratification which, within the framework of the Balkans, means that the word *Greek* is used to name every person who carries out trading activities, much as the word Aromanian is a synonym for a herdsman.

Addressing its chronology, the Consul states that "during the 43 years of activities carried out by (Apostol – our note) Margariti, the Romanian propaganda was developed and grew stronger, mainly in the Villayet of Bitola". A significant amount of finances were allocated for that purpose, amounting to 800,000 francs in 1909. Still, he emphasises, the Romanian propaganda had but insignificant success in Macedonia. According to the Consul, the reasons for this, besides the attacks of Greek gangs "who terrorise the Aromanian population in the last four years", were that the Aromanians were scattered, i.e. the absence of compact settlements, as well as the insufficient number of priests.<sup>19</sup>

Kalj wrote about this situation approximately six months previously as well. Thus, on returning from his leave towards the end of August 1909, he notes a certain calming of the situation between the "Christian nationalities" in the said area with respect to the previous period. In these circumstances, the Consul reports that the "Aromanians carry out their quiet propaganda as they did before, maintaining the best possible relations with the Young Turks

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<sup>18</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 110.

<sup>19</sup> Дракул, Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот, 111.

and trying to use the appropriate moment to their advantage and drive out the Greeks”.<sup>20</sup> He states that they did not protest the closing down of their national club, but that wanting to win over the Young Turk Committee “Unification and Progress”, they themselves had renounced it and suggested its closing down. Here, the Consul also underlines that the successful activity of the Romanian propaganda was hindered by constant accusations regarding the finances between the Romanian Consulate and the inspector for the Aromanian schools.<sup>21</sup>

#### RELATIONS BETWEEN THE AROMANIANS AND THE OTHER PEOPLES IN MACEDONIA AND ON THE BALKANS

In the said document dated February 1910, the Consul Kalj also analyses, in separate articles, the relations between various nationalities in the Villayet of Bitola. So, writing about the relations between Albanians and other nationalities, he says that they had always had friendly, even protective, relations with the Aromanians, helping them in their struggle with the Greeks. But he also points out the following: *“I recently notice, however, a certain cooling or, more precisely, a shadow of contempt in the Albanians towards Aromanians, most probably because of the latter exhibiting an attitude of growing attachment towards the Young Turks.”*<sup>22</sup>

As for the “Bulgarians”, as most of the Macedonians are usually named in these documents, Kalj states that they treat the Aromanians *“friendly and often come to their assistance in their struggle against the*

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<sup>20</sup> Copy of the report of the Russian Consul in Bitola, Kalj, to the imperial diplomatic representative in Constantinople, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> August 1909. Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 36.

<sup>21</sup> Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 36, 38.

<sup>22</sup> Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 102.

*Greeks*". What is noticeable is that the Russian Consul makes his analysis of the relations between Aromanians and the other nationalities through the prism of their strivings to tear away from the Greek domination.

## THE AROMANIAN CHURCH-EDUCATIONAL ISSUE AND THE IDEAS FOR AUTONOMY

In circumstances of intensified Greek propaganda with its open aspirations towards southern Macedonia and Thessalonica, which directly threatened Austria-Hungary's interests, Vienna supported Romanian actions in Macedonia, that is to say in the three villayets. Because of that, the Austria-Hungary diplomats in the Ottoman Empire expressed their support for Romanian aspirations in Macedonia untill the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and were direct protectors of Romanian propaganda activists, thus skilfully redirecting the eyes of the Romanian public from Transylvania. The Russian-Bulgarian close relations in 1896 forced a change in the Austria-Hungary's attitude towards the Romanian propaganda in Macedonia. Being aware of the Russian intentions to create a Slavonic front on the Balkans, and realizing the danger of the Russian influence entering Macedonia via Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary worked on creating an anti-Slavonic alliance between Romania and Greece. For its realization, Vienna was to contribute to overcoming the problems standing between Athens and Bucharest. Hence the meeting of the Greek King with the Romanian King in Abacija, where Karol committed to moderating the Romanian propaganda in Macedonia. In fact, what the dual monarchy needed was strengthening and uniting the Patriarchate element in Macedonia and redirecting the Romanian attention from the south of the Balkans towards South Dobrudza, which would put

Romania in a position to become a constant threat to the Russian partner – Bulgaria. It is no coincidence that the Austria–Hungary diplomats showed indifference and even hostility towards the Romanian aspirations in 1896–1903 for church separation of Aromanians from the religious authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>23</sup>

Given the circumstances, it is no coincidence that the Aromanian issue is found relevant by the Young Turk authority as well, and at a time, no less, when the Serbian–Bulgarian relations begin to get closer on many levels, under Russian patronage. In this respect, an illustrative example is the report of the Russian Consul-General in Thessalonica, Chirkov, sent to the diplomatic representative office in Constantinople in November 1909, in which he reports about this process. He states that this causes serious concerns with the Young Turk committee which, in answer, takes the side of the Greek and Aromanian interests in the country. In fact, the Young Turk authority plays on the card that the “attempts to create unity between the Slav peoples in Macedonia shall come across a most decisive resistance by the representatives of ‘the great Hellenic idea’.” It is also the reason why they, at that particular time, focus “their full attention on the Vlach element of the population, trying to secure sympathizers within this Christian bearing”. In that respect, the Aromanian propaganda too, which has “its own influential representatives in both the capital city and the local Young Turk committee, is now taken under special patronage of the authorities”. The Young Turk Committee even decides, “by way of settling the Greek–Vlach disagreements, to create a counter balance to the potential getting closer of Bulgarians and Serbians in Macedonia”.

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<sup>23</sup> Минов, *Влашкото прашање*, 344.

The role of the Young Turk authorities as mediators consists of securing the consent from the Greek circles for certain concessions “regarding the Kutzo-Vlachs in the area of their church aspirations”. The Committee also asked the Aromanians for a “program of their demands” promising them that if they were acceptable as far as the general state interests were concerned, they would “give them the broadest possible support at the coming discussion on the church-Macedonian issue in the Parliament”.

The “Kutzo-Vlachs”, as the Consul names them in this document, submitted their program to the Young Turk Committee. In it they pointed out the above mentioned problem of not having enough priests “due to the Patriarchate refusing to appoint ones that would hold a service and perform other things in Romanian language”. Moreover, the consul reports that the program states that the difficulties the Aromanian population encounters in fulfilling their religious needs, as well as the intensified Catholic propaganda by Italian missionaries, increase the flow of Kutzo-Vlachs to the bearing of Grekomans. Having that in mind, it was decided that all Aromanian church communities should submit a collective application to the Patriarchate for appointing priests who would hold the religious services in Romanian language. It is important to point out that in case the Patriarchate’s answer was negative, the Kutzo-Vlachs would have been forced “to turn to the other Orthodox patriarchs, asking them to appoint a separate bishop for them and, finally, to attain autocephaly for their church in Macedonia”. That is why the Russian consul is of the opinion that the Young Turk authorities see the

appearance of a new church unit as beneficial for their internal politics in Rumelia.<sup>24</sup>

What stands out is that, in the following period, the Aromanian issue is no longer treated as an issue of topical interest, and it virtually disappears in the consulted Russian diplomatic correspondence. In the period when the process of creating the Balkan alliance intensifies, the constellation of forces also changes, as well as both the interests of the Balkan countries and those of the Great Powers. In that respect, the Aromanian issue becomes interesting again during the First Balkan War, and it becomes so within the activities of the Austria-Hungary politics. Significant information on this is acquired from the official letter by the Minister Berchtold, dated the 30<sup>th</sup> October 1912, that he sent from Vienna to Ambassador Segjenji in Berlin, in which the Austria-Hungary's position regarding the war on the Balkans is stated. In it, amongst other things, it is stated the following:

*“Essentially, our interests can be summarised in the following way:*

- Free development of Albania;*
- Reject Serbia's request for enlarging its territory to the Adriatic Sea;*
- Meeting Romania's justified desires;*
- Securing Austria-Hungary's significant economic interests on the Balkans, especially in regards to the railroad connection with the Aegean Sea.”<sup>25</sup>*

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<sup>24</sup> Copy of the report of the Russian Consul in Thessalonica, Chirkov, to the imperial diplomatic representative in Constantinople, dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1909. Дракул, *Македонија меѓу автономијата и дележот*, 54–55.

The Aromanian issue undoubtedly causes interest during the Conference of the Ambassadors in St Petersburg, where the Russian side attempts for the last time to be the chief mediator in settling the disagreements between the Balkan allies. We learn of this from the telegram by the Austrian Ambassador Turn, dated the 11<sup>th</sup> January 1913 and sent from St Petersburg to the Minister Berchtold in Vienna, regarding the contemplations on some kind of autonomy for the Aromanians. In fact, the ambassador reports about his contacts with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonov, who points out to the fact that in overcoming the Bulgarian–Romanian differences one should be particularly careful in dealing with Bulgaria which displays that it is greatly concerned by the existing situation. In the document, it is stated that Bulgaria suggests four points with which to respond to the Romanian desires, amongst which the one on the “*autonomy of the Macedono–Vlachs and relinquishing all previous requests for Dobrudza...*”<sup>26</sup> The response from the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs is that he will present these points to His Majesty the King, adding that it is the first time that the Bulgarian and Romanian sides are having serious talks about the issues in dispute.

Further developments are accounted for in the brief telegram by the Austrian Ambassador in London, Count Mensdorff, dated the 29<sup>th</sup> January 1913 and sent to Count Berchtold, where it is stated the following:

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<sup>25</sup> Securing this important economic interest signifies, at the same time, that Austria-Hungary intended to have the territory of Macedonia within its sphere of influence. Државен архив на Република Македонија, 1369. М-1305/219 / ÖSTA, HHStA Wien, PA I, Fasz. 1114, Diplomatische Aktenstücke, Dok. 60, S. 36–37 (quoted DARM).

<sup>26</sup> DARM, 1.1369, М-1305 / ÖSTA, HHStA Wien, PA I, Fasz. 1114.

*“Mister Мишy<sup>27</sup> just told me that he and mister Danev<sup>28</sup> signed a Protocol in which they determined their mutual standpoints.*

*Bulgaria recognises regulating the border by cutting off the two areas located on the junction of three borders and one line from the eastern junction of three borders to an end line at the Black Sea.*

*In return, they ask for the well known concessions for the Macedonian Vlachs.”<sup>29</sup>*

The idea for a kind of autonomy, even a conditional one, for the Aromanians in Macedonia becomes a topical issue during 1913. But it has existed even before; thus, on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 1912, the Macedonian-Romanian association for intellectual culture from Bucharest, under the leadership of Dr. A. Leonte, C. F. Robesku, J. Valaori, G. Murnu and Dr. D. Dudumi, issued a pamphlet entitled “Macedonia to Macedonians” in French language, in which the Greeks and Serbs are accused of brutality towards Aromanians on the territory of Macedonia occupied during the First Balkan War. In this publication, the Aromanians from Macedonia advocate the establishment of autonomous Macedonia under the protection of the Great Powers. Details of this pamphlet are included in the report by USA diplomacy

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<sup>27</sup> Romanian representative in London, 1913.

<sup>28</sup> Dr. Stojan Danev, chairman of the Bulgarian Parliament before the Balkan wars, and later the Prime Minister as well.

<sup>29</sup> DARM, 1.1369, M-1305 / ÖSTA, HHStA Wien, PA I, Fasz. 1114.



on the agitation of Aromanians from Macedonia, dated the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1912 and sent from Bucharest.<sup>30</sup>

The American diplomatic reports state that as the Balkan states that were engaged in war began their preparations for the Bucharest Peace Conference, the strivings of Aromanians from Macedonia and from Albania for creating an Albanian–Aromanian autonomous state as a counter balance to the Pan-Slavism began to intensify as well.<sup>31</sup> It was envisaged for this state to be organised on the territories of Albania, south-western Macedonia and Epirus (Greece). The idea for creating an Albanian–Aromanian autonomy develops under the instructions of the Romanian government and on the suggestions of Austria–Hungary. Representatives of the Association of Aromanians from Romania and from Macedonia attended the Albanian–Aromanian conference held towards the end of October 1912 in Trieste. At the conference, it was agreed to ask Austria–Hungary and Italy for their support. As a result of this conference in Trieste, a letter was sent on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1913 to Woodrow Wilson, the President of USA himself, in which it was demanded that *“in the name of Vlachs, the only just solution to the Eastern Issue be supported, which is Macedonia for the confederate Macedonian nationalities, so as to secure a long lasting peace and political balance”*.<sup>32</sup>

The result of these demands is well known – namely, the Aromanians share the fate of the Macedonians after the partition of Macedonia with the Treaty of Bucharest. The letter by the minister of education to the Prime Minister of the Serbian government regarding the rights of the Aromanians

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<sup>30</sup> Ванче Стојчев и Александар Стојчев, *Букурешкиот мировен договор и поделбата на Македонија во 1913 година*, (Скопје: Институт за национална историја, 2013 г.), 154.

<sup>31</sup> Стојчев и Стојчев, *Букурешкиот мировен договор*, 154.

<sup>32</sup> Стојчев и Стојчев, *Букурешкиот мировен договор*, 155, 747.

in the newly conquered areas in Macedonia (1913), can serve as an illustration to the actual state of affairs in the Kingdom of Serbia at the time. There, amongst other things, it is written the following:

*“If the Romanian government asks for a national–church autonomy for the Vlachs, as until now it was the patriarchate for the Greeks and the exarchate for the Bulgarians... it absolutely should not be granted. If such autonomy of the Vlachs is to be granted, there is no doubt that shortly after, amongst other troubles, it would become a lair of national agitation with our own Vlachs within the old borders. And as we should not agree to grant the autonomy, we should also not agree to Romania giving the Vlachs any kind of subventions for their national needs.”*<sup>33</sup>

The Serbian authorities, having in mind the international situation and “realising that the Romanian government must be satisfied as regards this issue”, agrees to the following:

*“Regarding the church issue, the Vlachs can have the right to their own church communities recognised, and have Romanian liturgies and priests who would only look after the churches, but under no circumstances are the Vlachs to have a separate church with Romanian archpriests, but they are to belong to the Serbian church and as its part they shall fall under the Head of the Serbian church of the said region.”*<sup>34</sup> The minister is resolute in that “the Vlachs should not be granted the right to any kind of educational

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<sup>33</sup> Стојчев и Стојчев, Букурешкиот мировен договор, 552–553, 750.

<sup>34</sup> Стојчев и Стојчев, Букурешкиот мировен договор, 552–553, 751.

*organisation, but shall be part of our state educational organisation. All schools, even the Vlach ones on the territory of Serbia, belong completely to the Serbian state and it shall look after them in every respect”*<sup>35</sup> The intention is for the Serbian state to fully control the syllabus, the school books, the appointing of teachers and managers, and so on, as well as to ensure that the history of the Serbian people is taught in these schools in Serbian language as a regular subject. The Serbian minister points out: *“It is precisely these schools that would be Vlach and would nurture Vlach national feelings, but they would not be able to take matters in their own hands and raise opponents to Serbia and Serbianness.”*<sup>36</sup> He believes that if the schools are organised in this way, then they *“could become a source of loyalty towards the Serbian state and a foundation for good relations and accord of Wallachia with Serbia”*.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, the Serbian politician clearly points out that this refers only to the Macedonian Aromanians, and not to the others who live in Macedonia. Actually, in view of the fact that the Aromanians (or Tsintsars, as they are named in this document) are a minority as a people, he has no objections to making even greater concessions than those listed. But there are other reasons for his restraint which can clearly be seen at the end of the document where it is said as follows:

*“Besides, one should not forget the possibility of Europe (at some kind of congress, conference or the like) to impose to us obligations towards other nationalities too in the new regions, and so because of*

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<sup>35</sup> Стојчев и Стојчев, Букурешкиот мировен договор, 552–553, 751.

<sup>36</sup> Стојчев и Стојчев, Букурешкиот мировен договор, 552–553, 751–752.

<sup>37</sup> Стојчев и Стојчев, Букурешкиот мировен договор, 553, 752.

*that the Vlachs should not be recognised something that otherwise could be recognised in their case, them being in insignificant numbers, but which could be very inconvenient to give to another, stronger group.*<sup>38</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The consulted diplomatic sources (published and unpublished) enable us to follow the Aromanian issue which is constantly in the focus of various national propagandas in Macedonia and throughout the Balkans. And in the context of the events that took place before and during the Balkan Wars, its trajectory under certain historical circumstances, and depending on the political interests of both the Balkan states and the Great Powers, oscillates to various degrees. Hence the impression that the benefits in the church and cultural-educational fields that the Aromanians achieve in period immediately prior to the Balkan Wars are part of the strategic manoeuvre by the Young Turk authorities for maintaining their positions. The formal interest displayed by Austria-Hungary for the idea for a kind of autonomy of Aromanians can also be interpreted in that respect.

Also, we should emphasise that the Balkan wars, and later the First World War as well, were the reason for the mass emigration of Aromanians, for example from the Ohrid-Struga region, or more precisely from the villages of Upper and Lower Belica. There were several reasons for this, one of which is the fact that the border between Albania and the Kingdom of Serbia at first, followed by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes later, the structures of which contained, with some exceptions, the territory of today's Republic of

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<sup>38</sup> Стојчев и Стојчев, *Букурешкиот мировен договор*, 554, 752.

Macedonia after the Balkan wars, that is to say after the First World War, ran just above the village itself, along the ridge of Jablanica Mountain. That way the herdsmen of Belica had lost a great deal of the area which provided for their livelihood. At the same time, the border reduced their opportunities to use the coastal area Muzekija, that is to say they could not spend the winter periods there with the herds.<sup>39</sup> The same applies to the Aromanians from the eastern and from the central parts of Macedonia under Serbian rule, who had no access to the rich pastures of the Thessalonica Plain.

And finally, we can conclude that the Aromanians of this period share the fate of those peoples that after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire become parts of several state formations on the Balkans that would create their positions towards them differently.

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<sup>39</sup> Тодор Трајановски, *Влашките родови во Струшко* (Скопје: НИО „Просветен работник“, 1979), 88.

Лилјана ГУШЕВСКА  
Наташа КОТЛАР-ТРАЈКОВА

## ВЛАСИТЕ ВО МАКЕДОНИЈА ПРЕД И ЗА ВРЕМЕ НА БАЛКАНСКИТЕ ВОЈНИ (ВО ДИПЛОМАТСКИТЕ ИЗВОРИ)

### -РЕЗИМЕ -

Овој прилог се задржува на третирањето на Власите и на влашкото прашање во дипломатската документација главно од руска и од австриска провениенција, и тоа во периодот 1908 – 1913 г. Во своите опсежни анализи и сондирања на теренот во Македонија во пресрет на Балканските војни, дипломатите се осврнуваат и на етнографската состојба, споменувајќи ги и Власите како дел од народностите што живеат на овој простор. Притоа, се оценува дека тие иако се расфрлани низ целиот Балкански Полуостров, благодарение на својата забележлива „пргавост“ успеале да ги задржат својата националност и својот јазик. Во таа смисла, во дипломатската документација се среќаваат определени забелешки и податоци од историско-етнолошки карактер што се однесуваат на влашката популација.

Посебно внимание му се посветува на просветното прашање, како и на заложбите за црковна автономија на Власите. Притоа се истакнува односот со Вселенската патријаршија, која настојува да им се наметне и на Власите како и на другите православни христијани во Македонија и на поширокиот балкански ареал. Во врска со ова, се проследува и дејствувањето на романската пропаганда во Македонија, чија цел е преку училишната и црковната пропаганда да ги ослободи македонските Власи од елинизацијата.

На мировните конференции, пак, Власите се споменуваат и во смисла на постигнување некаква политичка автономија, но се нотираат и иницијативите за влашко-албанска политичка унија.