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The Image of Russia and Europe among the Slavic Minority in Boboshtica (District of Korça, Albania)*

My research is based upon oral narratives collected in 2010 and 2012 in Boboshtica (Albanian *Boboshticë*, Slavic *Boboštica/Boboščica*; the Korça district, South-East Albania) and draws on earlier oral texts from that village. The Slavic population of Boboshtica refer to themselves as Macedonian/Bulgarian and call their dialect “Kajnas”, meaning “at/of ours”. I will use the same term. This population declined strongly during the second half of the 20th century. Today there are only five heritage speakers of “Kajnas” in the village, all of them older than 70, bilingual (“Kajnas” and Albanian), and their knowledge of “Kajnas” can differ from very fluent to basic. The majority of the population in the village are Aromanian, and there are some Albanians as well. The lingua franca for the village dwellers is Albanian, and it has become the main language of communication for the Slavs in Boboshtica as well.

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The very specific thing about this village is that a significant number of its dwellers studied and/or pursued careers both in the big cities of Albania and in other countries. Among them were the founder of the first Albanian radio station Gjergj Bubani, the enlightener Dhimitri Canco, the well-known Romanian writer Victor Eftimiu, the Albanian scholar Sotir Kuneshka, the patriot Dhimitër Mole, who attended the so-called Alphabet Congress of 1908 in Bitola/Manastir, and many others. The French Lyceum in Korça (*Liceu Francez*, operating fully between 1917–1939) gave a good start to many people of Boboshtica as well as to those from the whole Korça valley.

Language situation in the village

The exact dates of Slavic inhabitation of the region are unknown. Local informants state that Slavs had lived in the village since the times of Tsar Samuil¹ (10th century AD) and say that before the beginning of the 20th century the village was ethnically and linguistically homogeneous. Many people used to look for jobs in Romania, but they went there without their families and usually came back. There had been a Greek school in Boboshtica since the 1880s, the Albanian school was opened in 1917. Church services were conducted in Greek. In the last decades of the 19th century local enlighteners (Rev. Theodor Koçov (Ikonomo), Dhimitri Verdhov, Dhimitri Canco) made efforts to translate some services into “Kajnas”, but it did not become a tradition. Today there is no priest in the village, on feasts and Sundays a priest comes from Tirana or from Korça. The divine service is conducted in Albanian.

In 1912 Korça district (including Boboshtica) became part of the new Albanian state. Slavs were the majority in the village up to the mid-20th century (according to A. Mazon, in the beginning of the 1930s the majority of the 187 farmsteads were Slavic-speaking). After WWII there was a dramatic decrease of the autochthonous population due to migration to big Albanian cities (Tirana, Korça, Durrës, Fier, Shkodra and Elbasan) and outside the country. The razing of Boboshtica by members of the anti-communist organisation Balli Kombëtar gave additional impetus to the migrating population.

On moving to new lands, people from Boboshtica did not forget their home village. To help their fellow villagers they created societies (Alb. *shoqatë*). The first society was created in Bucharest in 1882 and was called Filloditurake Boboshtar. In 1894 the Shoqëria Boboshtare society took its place. The aims of these two societies, as well as of Lulëzimi, organised in 1905 in the United States, were economic aid to the village and construction aid. The Autonomia society created in 1894 in Sofia, as opposed to those listed above, had, first and foremost, political

¹ According to Macedonian discourse, Tsar Samuil was the first Macedonian tsar who established the first Macedonian state in 976 A.D. that was later occupied by the Byzantines. According to Bulgarian discourse, Tsar Samuil was the emperor of the so-called Western Bulgarian Kingdom or Western Bulgarian Empire.

goals: liberation from the Ottoman Empire. Boboshtica villagers' organisations in other countries had a very important role in keeping the migrants together, preserving their traditions and their connection with the mother village.²

Aromanians began to settle in the village in the first half of the 20th century. According to the estimates of Sotir Dhamko, now only 42 families are autochthonous village dwellers³ and 136 families are new settlers (mainly Aromanians). In addition, there are 225 families from Boboshtica in Korça, 50 families in Tirana, 15 in Durrës, and 10 in Elbasan (Dhamko 2010: 156). Among the Aromanians and the Slavs in Boboshtica, many have switched to Albanian, which is the only official language in the village and a lingua franca for interethnic communication; but while the percentage of Aromanians who still speak their native tongue is relatively high, only six Slavic autochthones still speak "Kajnas", their ability to speak the language varying among them from very high to partial. All these speakers are bilingual with Albanian. All the speakers in the village are over 70 years old and their children and grandchildren usually do not know "Kajnas" or their knowledge is passive. At the same time many Albanised Slavs still consider themselves, together with their Slavic fellow villagers, to be "djemtë e vajzat e Boboshticës" ("sons and daughters of Boboshtica"), in other words, autochthones, in opposition to the newcomers.

Slavic Boboshtica villagers call themselves Macedonians, Bulgarians and just Slavs, and their language — Macedonian/Bulgarian/Slavic or "Kajnas". I shall describe the attitude of the speakers to their language in detail later. The dialect is claimed by the scholars of both Bulgaria and Macedonia as Bulgarian/Macedonian, but I would like to concentrate more on its unique sociolinguistic status. "Kajnas" is an island Slavic dialect with limited communication functions, and neither Bulgarian nor Macedonian can be considered its *Dachsprache* (in Kloss's terms), so here the more fruitful way is to follow the speakers' self-reference(s), and these tend to underline their uniqueness over similarities with Bulgarian or Macedonian, depending on the topic of the conversation. I shall describe this issue in much more detail later.

"Kajnas" speakers

This research is based upon interviews conducted in 2010–2012 with three "Kajnas" speakers: Elpi Manço, Ilo Kuneshka and Sotir Bambulli. I also interviewed other village dwellers, both Slavic- and Albanian-speaking autochthones (Albanised Slavs). Besides that, I use interviews with Boboshtica villagers and Ilo Kuneshka's notes about the history of the village, published by K. Steinke and Xh. Ylli (Steinke, Ylli 2007: 337–339). The speakers use Albanian orthography when writing "Kajnas", while I use simplified Latin transcription

² The information about the Boboshtica villager societies abroad is exhibited in the village museum. I also used some unpublished notes by Elpi Manço.

³ The majority, however, do not speak Slavic.

with additional necessary symbols. Accent is shown by underlining; when the speakers switch to another language the proper orthography is used. In the data published by other researchers the orthography is preserved.

Elpi was born in Boboshtica in 1936 in a teacher's family. Her family spoke "Kajnas", but under the influence of her friends and neighbours she generally spoke Albanian. She activated "Kajnas" only when she had to take care of her paralysed mother for three years.

Ilo Kuneshka was also born into a teacher's family in Boboshtica, in 1925. It was his father Sotir who helped Andre Mazon during his stay in Boboshtica in 1933 and 1934. A. Mazon published two photographs of Ilo at the age of eight (Mazon 1936: 257) and a letter Ilo wrote in "Kajnas" to Paris to his elder brother Sotir in 1934 (Mazon, Filipova-Bajrova 1965: 65). After the democratic changes in the political life of Albania, Ilo was interviewed by Lj. Spasov (Спасов 2011: 227–231), K. Steinke and Xh. Ylli (Steinke, Ylli 2007).

Sotir Bambulli was born in 1930⁴, he graduated from the Institute of Mathematics and Physics in Tirana and worked as a teacher of mathematics and physics at school.

Education in the system of values of the Boboshtica villagers

Among many other things, Boboshtica is unique because of the autochthonous speakers' special attitude towards education. The Greek school in the village (from the 1880s until the 1910s; the Albanian school was launched in 1917) did not make Boboshtica different. It was the French Lyceum in Korça (Liceu Francez, fully in function in 1917–1939) which gave many Boboshtica villagers the opportunity to obtain a higher education abroad. The children went from Boboshtica to Korça and back on foot (before the Kuneshkas bought bicycles); it took about 1 hour and 45 minutes one way. As one of the speakers stated, children from Boboshtica constituted a considerable part of the pupils, even though there were many villages nearer to the Lyceum, not forgetting Korça itself.

On graduating from the Lyceum, many Boboshtica villagers continued their education in big academic and educational centres in Albania and Europe. Sotir Dhamko gives a list of villagers (mainly Slavs, according to their names) with higher education — 43 people in total, 18 of whom got their education in Albania and 25 abroad (in Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Russia, Romania, France and Czechoslovakia). Thirteen people became university teachers. Besides that, 27 people got a military education, six in the Soviet Union and 21 in Albania. Seventy-seven more people got a special professional education (cf. German *Ausbildungsberufe*) at the pedagogical college in Korça and became teachers in schools of the region. Distinguished people born in Boboshtica included Dhimitri Canco (1814–1904; studied in Constantinople and in Pitești in Romania, published

⁴ Sotir told me this. At the same time, Kl. Steinke and Xh. Ylli wrote that he was two years younger than Ilo Kuneshka, so he must have been born in 1927 (Steinke, Ylli 2007: 337).

some documents about the history of the village and translated parts of the divine service and Gospels into "Kajnas"), Dhimitër Mole (an Albanian patriot, migrated to Bulgaria and then took part in the Manastir Congress in 1908 when the modern Albanian alphabet was approved), Gjergj Bubani (1899–1954; launched the first Albanian radio station), Victor Eftimiu (1899–1972, a famous Romanian writer), Sotir Kuneshka (1912–1992, the first specialist in nuclear physics in Albania, the first dean of the department of natural science at the Tirana state university, an academician in the Albanian Academy of Sciences, a consultant of the dictionary of the modern Albanian language (1980)) and many others.

It is doubtful whether another village with such a large number of good technical specialists and students of well-known universities can be found anywhere else in Albania. For the people of Boboshtica, education and special skills are a condition *sine qua non* of a successful person. Any person "so um"/ "with mind/reason/knowledge" is greatly respected, no matter the field of specialisation. Both labour skills and other experience are valuable. Elpi told me about different researchers — linguists and ethnographers — coming to the village and interviewing her, she compared the questions she was asked and even evaluated their skills to work with an informant.

In this special attitude towards education I can find one of the factors fostering the ethnic change in the village. Higher and special education became a means of "social advancement" for many Boboshtica people, providing them with good jobs in large Albanian cities. They took their families as well, so only the older generation remained in the village. Of course the migrants uphold their relations with the people who remained behind and even visit them on holidays, but this link will cease in the next one or two generations.

Language and identity

In Boboshtica as well as everywhere in the Balkans, language is among the most important values. Speaking about the history of the village and the lack of documents about its founding, Elpi said: "I s^{os} estⁱ dokument, šo zborv^jme 'Kajnas', žoš t^ja v^el'e n^emate dokumenti, p^o do^bar dokument n^ema".⁵ During our conversations she repeated this several times: the language spoken in the village is the best evidence of the villagers' antiquity and autochthonous status. After a linguistic expedition from the Institute of Macedonian Language in Skopje came to Boboshtica in November 2006 with the aim of describing the Slavic toponymics of the Korça valley, Elpi wrote down some Slavic toponyms from Boboshtica and its vicinity which, according to her, are evidence of the autochthonous status of the Slavs in this region.⁶

⁵ "The mere fact that we speak 'Kajnas' is a document, because they talk as if we didn't have any documents. But there can be no better document".

⁶ Here is the list: Llanova, Gllaveshova, Viçi petroer, Metoq, Bambullova, Gavrillova, Guzillova, Dedullova, Sopatishte, Pandornica, Galinata, Lisqete, Kraishta, Boçka, Muzga,

"Kajnas" is one of the key elements in the identity of the villagers. Even those who do not speak it, enumerate it among other elements as definitive of the village's identity: "Kajnas", national costumes, the celebration of Rosice (Mid-Pentecost; on this day women go through the village, sing songs, collect gifts and hold a huge gathering the next day), mulberry trees (*Morus*; "Kajnas": "čarničke", Albanian: "mana") which are a perfect raw material for the local *rakia*.

Apart from being a component of the local identity, "Kajnas" is a value in itself because it can be a means of communication. Elpi told me about Andrea going to a factory in Kastoria/Kostur in Greece. First he could not understand the director, because the director spoke only English and Greek and Andrea did not speak either of these languages. Then Andrea asked the director if he spoke any Macedonian:

I mu rekoj: Zborviš makedonski? — Ka ne zborvam!, reče. ... Tielko siedo, tri novi, mi baraje po svata fabrika tamo, mi kaže tjez ščo mi trebjeje mjene, reče ..., i zborvajme Kajnas. Šo ža se veli, jeden jezik malečok kaj esti makedonski, žoš francuski i angliski ese jazici goljemi tija ... i trebi da go znje čovjeko. (Elpi Mančo)⁷

The role of "Kajnas" as one of the elements of Boboshtica identity is not limited to the local level. The Boboshtica identity pyramid "I am a Boboshtica dweller — I am Korčan — I am Albanian"⁸ is complicated here because "Kajnas" can be used as a basis for another model. Bulgaria and Macedonia are two competing options for a Boboshtica identity based on language, that is why a definition of the status of "Kajnas" (a Bulgarian or Macedonian dialect or a language in its own right) depends on the identity of the village dwellers (Bulgarians, Macedonians or something else).

These self-references as Bulgarians/Macedonians/Slavs and the names chosen for the languages (Bulgarian, Macedonian, "Kajnas" or "our language") can be used at different times even by the same people. It depends on the topic of the conversation. If a topic not connected to language is discussed, the words

Plločinata, Varbica, Blladenovo, Denica, Podvrok, Vonakovo, Skarkata Sfata Nikoliska, Tiof, Garvanka, Skarkata na Sviti Lia, Kovačovi, Garlloto Goljemo, Garlloto malečko, Curculciti, Pelyer dollen, Pelyer oxgora, Krestati pat, Čaparovi. She also wrote down the names of the neighbouring villages: Dvorjene, Kamenica, Pepellash, Bjella voda, Orenjo, Polena, Voskopoja, Drenovjene, Ostrovica, Pojan, Gollobërda, Zvezda, Podgorie, Porodina, Damjanec. She thinks that all of these names are of Slavic origin. When I asked what the etymology of Voskopoja (Albanian Voskopoje, Arumanian Moscopole, Greek Μοσχοπόλις) would be, she said that it was "pol'e za asker"/ "army field". But this brings us to the topic of lexical conversion from code to code (cf. the Greek πόλις, in Elpi's idea matching the Slavic *nole*).

⁷ "And I say to him: Do you speak Macedonian? — Of course! So, I stayed three days, I was shown the whole factory, everything I needed to see, said Andrea. And we spoke 'Kajnas'. What can we say, such a small language as Macedonian — because French and English are big languages — and one should know it as well".

⁸ Compare the European identity pyramids (cf. "I am Bavarian — I am German — I am European").

"Kajnas", "makedonski" and "bulgarski" are used as synonyms. The term "jaziko(t) naš" does not depend on the topic. If the topic is the peculiarities of "Kajnas", however, only the words "Kajnas" and "jaziko(t) naš" are used, because in this case Macedonian and Bulgarian are opposed to it.

In this peculiar situation with multiple choices of identity, the decision is to choose the Albanian one. Elpi told me about an argument she unwillingly had taken part in:

I mi dojde tua eden od Skopja, eden maž, mlad bje ... i bje na porti, ustana, i mi reče toj: Zborviš makedonski ti? — Nje, jeskaj zborvam Kajnas, ne zborvam makedonski, mu rekoj jeskaj. Šo esti Kajnas? — Kajnas esti jezik I reče: Ti mor, ti nesi boboshtenka, ti nesi albanska, ti esi makedonska — Nje, jeskaj nesam makedonska, jesam albanska, toko origjinata naša esti bulgaro-slave, nje makedonski, bulgaro-slave — Nje, zborvaš janglaš — Nje, ne zborvam janglaš jeskaj. A kombesijata? — Kombesijata albanska. (Elpi Manço)⁹

So Elpi defines the national identity of the village dwellers as Albanian even if their heritage is Bulgarian/Slavic.¹⁰

As I have already said, "Kajnas" is a value for the village dwellers, because it is included in the pyramid of their local identity. But from the viewpoint of the friend-foe opposition its status is not so clear. If "Kajnas" is used as a means of communication, something which makes the Boboshtica people special (even if they do not speak it), it is marked as *friend* beyond a doubt. But the language of everyday communication (even for Ilo, Sotir and Elpi) is Albanian: they speak this language to their friends and relatives, listen to the radio and watch TV, read books, use it in more official circumstances. That is why one of the most often used clichés when they cannot remember a word in "Kajnas" (which happens often) is "We call this thing so and so, but I have no idea how to say this in 'Kajnas'" or just "We call it like this":

kaj izl'ezi me enaš, da vidime dynja, ka mu vel'ime; imame storeno daskalata fillore, mu vel'ime nje, tua, vo selo»; «I toj se klava vo eden itis, ili nadvor vo... toka, ili vo dvoro. ... Toke da esti, ballë-përballë mu vel'ime, če da se pul'e. Nje odzadi. Nje na kraj. Toke, ballë-përballë mu vel'ime nje, so da se puli; koga

⁹ "And so there came to me a guy from Skopje, a young guy. And he stood at the entrance and asked: Do you speak Macedonian? — No, I speak 'Kajnas', I don't speak Macedonian, I replied. — What is 'Kajnas'? — 'Kajnas' is a language. And he said, You are not Boboshtican, you are not Albanian, you are Macedonian. — No, I am not Macedonian, I am Albanian, but our origin is Bulgarian Slavic. — No, you are mistaken. — No, I am not. And what is your nationality? — My nationality is Albanian".

¹⁰ It is worth noting that evidence of the Albanian identity of Boboshtica villagers can be traced back as early as the 1930s, cf. the following sentence from a letter sent by a Boboshtica woman named Kostanca to her nephew Sotir Kuneshka studying in Paris, on 24 November 1933: "Sall zdravie ot Boga da imash, i za drugjete da n'emash kasavet ic, da bandish mash i shqipëtarin" ("Just may you have health from God and don't worry about the others at all, be a man and an Albanian") (Mazon, Filipova-Bajrova 1965: 70).

vl'egviše od planina, od stado, *çobano*, ka mu vel'ime ne, kad... na Kajnas... Toj
 šo branješe, toj šo branješe... MM: ovce, krave. EM: Ovčarot! (Ilo Kuneshta, Sotir
 Bambulli, Elpi Manço)¹¹

So the language most associated with "us, speakers" is Albanian, and "Kajnas" paradoxically enough becomes a *foe* language.

Religion and identity

All the village dwellers are Orthodox. As the Boboshtica Slavs say, they have not let any Albanian Muslim settle in the village. When Sotir Bambulli recalls his life in socialist Albania, the most significant place is dedicated to the Orthodox faith they preserved in the family regardless of the prohibitions. During big feasts and on Sundays Sotir and some other people went to the closed churches in the village, lit candles and prayed. They also prayed at home. The language of the prayers was predominantly Albanian, but there were some Greek prayers as well. After the democratic changes in Albania, Sotir organised the opening of the first Orthodox church in post-socialist Albania (the church of Saint Mary in Boboshtica, 15 August 1990). On 6 January 1991 in Korça they created a society called Mbajtësit e Kryqit (Those Who Bring the Cross) and Sotir became the secretary. The members of the society went to Albanian towns and villages and opened churches. On 17 March of the same year a constituent assembly of the reborn Albanian Orthodox Church took place and Sotir was chosen as the head of direction. He went to the Kastoria/Kostur seminary to discuss whether Albanian candidates to take priestly vows would have the opportunity to study there. After that he headed the Albanian delegation in search of a bishop; in Athens he talked to Metropolitan Anastasios (Giannulatos), and after he agreed they went to Constantinople to speak to the Ecumenical Patriarch about the canonical status of the Albanian Orthodox Church. Bishop Anastasios was sent to Albania first as a patriarchal exarch and later as the head of the Autocephalous Albanian Orthodox Church. Sotir retired and now lives in his house in Boboshtica.

The Orthodox faith together with the Greek roots of the family is the basis for Sotir Bambulli's identity. When Sotir's wife (she is Albanian, born in one of the Albanian villages in the vicinity of Korça) started speaking about the Rosice festivities which had been celebrated in the village the day before, Sotir said very strictly that this holiday was pagan and Orthodox people instead should celebrate

¹¹ Foreign (=Albanian) inclusions are in italics: "when we go abroad to see the *dynja* [world] as we call it"; "we finished *fillore* [primary] school, as we call it, here, in the village"; "And it is put into the wall outside, in *toka* [ground, earth], or inside in the courtyard. But it must be *ballë-përballë* [the face side forward], as we say, so it can be seen. Not from the backside, not on the edge. But, *ballë-përballë* [the face side forward], as we say, so it can be seen"; "When he was coming down from the mountains, from the herd, *çobano* [the herdsman], as we call him, when... in 'Kajnas'... the guy who kept watch over... MM: The sheep, the cows EM: The shepherd!"

Mid-Pentecost, when the Church remembers Christ's teaching in the Jerusalem Temple. Then he spoke about the history of Orthodoxy in Albania, about the leading place of the Russian Orthodox Church among the other Orthodox churches. He even remembered that women should wear kerchiefs in church, which is a common practice in Greece and Russia. The topics he is interested in reflect a certain area of interest of the church media, which is common, to a very large extent, in Albania, Greece and Russia.

With Orthodoxy as the basis of identity, there are certain predispositions in the attitude towards Russia. In Albania as a whole and in Boboshtica in particular, Russia is still interpreted as the Soviet Union, which has generally good connotations. For Sotir, however, the good connotations in the image of Russia are connected first and foremost to the common religious tradition in South Albania, Greece and Russia. He has read a lot about Russian Orthodoxy (publications are available in Greek and Albanian). In his words, "patriarku i Rusisë është simbol i Ortodoksisë për tërë botën sot"¹².

The "Kajnas" society

The system of values of the villagers is reflected in a very interesting document: the charter of the "Kajnas" society (written down in November 2006).¹³ Let us skip the parts common for all legal documents and focus on the important details connected to the system of values.

First of all, the language of the document is "Kajnas" and not Albanian, even though the majority of the society's members do not speak it. I would call it an attempt to give "Kajnas" official status. The paragraphs dealing with language issues are very transparent:

The language of "Kajnas" should be spoken in the village and let us not ever forget it, ... It is essential that those old people who still live in the village tell the young the names of the mountains, fields, rivers, so that it would stay with no changes, ... Let us make efforts to teach our children "Kajnas", ... A textbook and a dictionary should be made. At home we should speak this language to our children, ... A member of the society can be anyone ... from the old families in Boboshtica and Drenovjene, where they spoke and still speak "Kajnas". (Dhamko 2010: 87–91)

"Kajnas" in the system of values of the Boboshtica villagers is strongly connected to rituals and cultural tradition:

The society should bring the villagers together. Let the tradition which used to be in the village be kept properly, the rites of weddings, funerals, baptism.

¹² "Today the Patriarch of Russia is a symbol of Orthodoxy for the whole world".

¹³ I have a version of the charter published in Dhamko (Dhamko 2010: 87–91), short information about the charter is also given by Антонова-Василева (2009: 16). The text of the charter in „Kajnas” was published in Makartsev 2015. Here I quote it in translation into English.

Let us sing songs in the “Kajnas” language, tell stories, keep the traditions of celebrations; ... Let us do even the impossible to find documents about the culture of our villages, about the churches, schools, springs,¹⁴ roads, everything good¹⁵ that has ever been in our villages. (Makartsev 2015: 161)

The landscape (mountains, fields and rivers), architectural objects (churches, schools, water springs and roads), rituals and cultural traditions exist through language and are not perceived as being separate from it. Let us remember, for example, the list of toponyms made by Elpi — what else can we call it if not an attempt through language to fix a space falling apart with the death of the people (“so it would stay with no changes”)?

After the landscape, one of the most important elements of the Boboshtica space are plants, first of all the mulberry trees: “Both villages [Boboshtica and Drenovjene — M. M.] are covered through and through with an uncountable number of mulberry trees, black, planted from time immemorial.” (Makartsev 2015: 162)

Mulberry trees in the whole region can be found only in Boboshtica, Drenovjene and also in the vicinity of Treska and Trebicka (near Vithkuq). Sotir Dhamko writes that according to the oral tradition, mulberries were brought to the village by St. Naum, a pupil of Cyril and Methodius (Dhamko 2010).

Leaving Boboshtica, every villager kisses and pats the trunk of a mulberry tree as if to get its blessing for every good deed.

Another symbolic act is marking the skin of guests with mulberry juice. Its idea is a good wish and also confirmation that the person has been to Boboshtica. This tradition is observed during the celebration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary — 15 August. As for the people of Boboshtica, they do not need this confirmation, their hands are black in all seasons because they gather mulberries to produce *rakia* (Dhamko 2010: 8).

Boboshtica villagers travelling abroad

During the first years after the end of WWII and the victory of the National Liberation Front headed by Enver Hoxha, the Albanian government sent talented young people to receive an education in leading educational, academic and industrial centres abroad, above all to the Soviet Union but also to other European countries. Young people from Boboshtica used this opportunity to the full. The majority of those who obtained a higher education (43 people) did so abroad (25 people — based on the data collected by Sotir Dhamko). For example, Elpi’s two brothers, Todor and Andrea, were educated abroad. Todor studied in Cracow as a mining engineer at the Academy of Mining and Metallurgy, and later worked there for some time before he came back to Albania. Andrea studied in Moscow for five years as a construction engineer, married

¹⁴ *çezmjete*.

¹⁵ *dobrinjete*, from *dobrina* ‘bienfait’ (Mazon 1936).

a Russian called L'uba Šiškina (Elpi pronounces her name [l'uba išiškina], with a prothetic *i*, or sometimes as [l'uba išiškinova]). Both of Elpi's brothers achieved high positions: Andrea became the head of the Albanian Machine Import company and Todor had the opportunity to become an assistant minister of mining industry but rejected the position because he thought his qualifications were more appropriate for the mines. That is why he became the head of the chrome mines in Bulçiza. Andrea and Todor went on business trips to foreign countries and the elder brother, Todor, even took vacations in Indonesia and China.

According to Elpi, Todor used to recall that after the war Poland was a very poor country and there were only onions and tea in the shops. The Polish people impressed him with their religiousness. Being a mining engineer, he remembered the Wieliczka Salt Mine:

I da odješe tamo, velješe Todor, ti se raspiješe umo. Ikonizme od sol', i kambanarija od sol', mnogo, mnogo, mnogo dobar, mnogo grad vet.¹⁶ (Elpi Manço)

Like Todor, Andrea got his higher education abroad, not in Cracow but in Moscow. After five years there (1948–1954) he received his engineering degree. After that he worked for one year as an engineer in Cherkassy in Ukraine. There were many machine and tractor stations and many Albanians who, upon finishing their studies in the Soviet Union, had traineeships there. As Andrea later became the chief of an Albanian machine import company, he visited many European countries and China. Elpi said that:

Rusija davješe bad'ava se Shqipëria, Albanije. Kad činjeje marrëdhënje soj zemie, Rusija i puščješe, aj zemi tjeje, žoš este siromasi. Bez pare, bez niš.¹⁷ (Elpi Manço)

As opposed to the Soviet Union, all the other countries Andrea ever had business talks with were looking for their own profit. But the image of the "poor relation in the family" was very unpleasant for the Albanians if we consider their mentality. Elpi remembers Andrea saying to the Albanian Embassy employees in Prague when he saw that their cars were the oldest and the worst of all the other embassies in Prague: "Albania can't be such a shame in the centre of Europe, here is money, now go and buy yourself new cars".

Both Ilo Kuneszka and his smaller brother Kristaq followed their eldest brother Sotir, and in 1946 they went to get a higher education abroad: Ilo to Prague and Kristaq to Cracow (where he studied metallurgy). Their journey to the university and back is worth noting: Ilo remembers that they went to Montenegro by bus, then through Sarajevo to Belgrade, and then to Prague. At every point of the route they needed to wait for a very long time, sometimes for a week. During

¹⁶ "— And when you went there, as Todor said, you could go crazy. Icons [made] of salt, and a bell tower of salt. A very good, a very old town".

¹⁷ "Russia used to give everything to Albania for free. When they had talks, Russia gave many things: take this, because you have a poor country. For no money, for nothing".

their stay at university Ilo and Kristaq went home only once, after they finished the fourth year of studies. It happened after the government's order to check the loyalty of Albanian students studying abroad. At that time Albania had already broken off diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia (1 July 1948) and in November 1948 the First Congress of the Albanian Party of Labour proclaimed the Yugoslav leaders "traitors" and "Trotskyites". As Ilo says:

okam Serbija ne se pominjāše, oti nje rasipajme rabotite so Serbija <...> Tje se veruvaje ako odime okam Serbija, da ne ostanjme tamo, da ne sakame komunizem albanski. Ama nje ne imajme toj vo um, toko ajde, šo da storjme. (Ilo Kuneshka) ¹⁸

That is why they had to go by train to Budapest, then to Bucharest and then further to Constanța. From Constanța they went by ship to Durrës (via Istanbul and around the whole of Greece). After that they were allowed to finish their studies and in 1951 they finally returned to Albania.

The Albanian students who studied at Charles University in Prague (20 Albanian students came in the first year) lived in the dormitory together with other students from Eastern Europe. During the whole stay there were no serious conflicts between students from different countries or between the students and the Czechs. From Prague, Ilo went to visit Kristaq in Cracow and at that time he was also able to visit a friend from Korça who was studying in Wrocław. The Albanian government paid them a monthly scholarship, so even if the students were not very rich, they were not needy and could even have lunch at a restaurant in the boulevards.

The European cities Ilo was able to see did not impress him, neither with their architecture nor with their size, even though he had come from a remote mountain village where all the houses had no more than two floors: "Ne bieše nešto novo."¹⁹ After that he changed the topic of the conversation to the Czechs. As he remembers:

čehoslovaciće ese dobri l'udi. Ne se čuvi nikojpat da se kare, da se grize. ... Po gazetjite, po novinjite ne se ču šo se iskradi na kašta vo selo ili ne... nikojpat ne se čuvi. Poščani ese, dobri ese ²⁰ (Ilo Kuneshka)

At the same time, during his stay Ilo did not have the opportunity to become friends with the locals. He describes them as polite but reserved people. When after some time I asked Ilo what impressions he had from Prague, he changed the topic again and again to the Czechs' character.

¹⁸ "We couldn't go via Serbia because we had broken off relations with Serbia. They believed that if we went through Serbia we would show our dislike of Albanian communism and stay there. We didn't think anything like that, but what could we do".

¹⁹ "It wasn't anything new".

²⁰ "The Czechs are nice people. You never heard that someone had fought or argued. In the papers and in the news there was nothing about someone having stolen something in a village. They are noble and nice".

He was just as brief about the other European cities he was able to visit: Belgrade, Berlin, Budapest, Bucharest, Constanța, Cracow, Sarajevo and Wrocław. In his narration the cities are not “worlds in themselves”, but mere points on a geographical map which have some value because of the fact that some people close to him lived there at some moment in time (Wrocław, Cracow), due to the resources they offer (Berlin and Budapest where he went on business trips), or as transition stations.²¹

Foreigners and foreign culture in Boboshtica

After WWII the country that most influenced Albania was the Soviet Union. Even after the diplomatic break in 1961, the Soviet Union of Stalin's epoch was the ideal model Enver Hoxha was guided by. That is why the USSR/Russia occupied a big place in the Albanian image of the world before the democratic changes in the late 1980s. Due to the continuance of the basic principles and syllabuses laid into the Albanian educational system during the time of Albanian-Soviet collaboration, Albanian schoolchildren and students learned Russian language and literature until the beginning of the 1990s (НОВИК 2011: 103–123).

An interview with one of the “Kajnas” speakers provides an “archetypical” Albanian image of Russia. Riko Bogadini (apparently of the same age as Elpi Manço) came to see me when the neighbours let him know there was a researcher from Russia who had come to Boboshtica. He was born in Boboshtica in a mixed family. His father was an Albanian from Korça, his mother was an autochthone from Boboshtica and spoke “Kajnas”. He worked as a teacher at the primary school in the village and later for one year in Pustec in Prespa; now Riko is retired. He remembers some “Kajnas”, mixes tenses and uses many Albanian words where

²¹ This makes him different from other people of the Balkans with whom I have spoken about European or Russian cities. An interest in architectural uniqueness, art collections and cultural life is a universal trait of any civilised human being. But certain peculiarities emerge due to the model of the world. The majority of people from the Balkans I have spoken to remarked that Russian cities (Saint Petersburg and Moscow) impress them with their space: wide streets, tall buildings. Big distances are another feature of many European cities, including Russian ones. “In Skopje I could visit ten places a day and do ten different things, while here in Moscow going from one place to another takes me half a day”, said a girl from Macedonia living in Moscow. An Albanian who had worked five years in London as a builder said that the city suppressed him with its size. Even though travelling one way took him three hours a day by bus, he never tried to go by tube because he was afraid to get lost. The different landscape impresses people as well: “We miss the mountains very much”, as my friends and colleagues from Balkan countries (Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania) used to say while in Warsaw, Leipzig, Moscow and Paris. During the summer they are impressed by the day length in Central and North Europe (the long light evenings till 11 p.m. in Moscow, the white nights in Saint Petersburg). In winter the low position of the sun above the horizon is a real shock. In December many colleagues of mine from Macedonia and Albania I met in Toruń (northern Poland) said they see that the sun “hardly comes out of the horizon” but cannot understand and accept it. “I had the feeling that the sky was falling on me”, said a Macedonian colleague of mine.

he cannot remember the "Kajnas" ones. We started the conversation in "Kajnas" but soon switched to Albanian. He said his fellow villagers sometimes called him "Russian" because he loved the Russians, especially Lenin, very much. He recited *Song of Our Country* (*Широка страна моя родная*)²² in Russian. Though he respects Lenin, he remarked that he did not like Stalin and Hoxha because his mother's brother was an executed innocent during Hoxha's times. He said: "Sporti në Rusi është shumë i zhvilluar dhe Rusët janë njerëz shumë të mirë".²³ For him as well as for many other Albanians the USSR/Russia are associated with Russian language lessons at school, poems and songs, historical faces of the Soviet period and sport.

An additional element special for Boboshtica is the idea of pan-Slavic unity. As Ilo told me:

Jas bi sakal da odaj tiente vo Rusija da vida. Tazi e majka mi. Majkata naša Rusja esti. ... Ščerkata od Rusija esti Bulgarija, i nie esme vnučite od Rusija.²⁴
(Ilo Kuneszka)

But this is the only example of this kind and it is possible that Ilo was influenced during his studies in Prague.

Elpi Maço's image of Russia and Russians is very complicated, because her brother Andrea was married to a Russian girl, L'uba Šiškina, whom he had met during his studies in the Soviet Union. They lived in the same dormitory, though they were students of different faculties: he was working on his engineering degree while she was going to become a meteorologist. The first time he came back home without her he missed her very much and sat at the table and sang *Moscow Nights* (*Подмосковные вечера*).²⁵ His mother asked him why he was so sad; if he had left a loved one in Moscow then he should go back and marry her. Visiting the Soviet Union the next time as a member of an engineers' delegation, he married her and brought her to Albania. As Elpi says, the information about the engineers' coming and the law allowing Russian citizens to marry foreigners were published in the same issue of a newspaper. When L'uba saw it, she found the place where Andrea was staying and came to his place with this newspaper in her hand. It was a sacrifice to marry a foreigner; L'uba had to abandon her country and go to an unknown land, without knowledge of the Albanian language or culture, and there was no turning back.

Andrea and L'uba spent three years in Moscow after Andrea became the Albanian chief commercial officer in the Soviet Union. Their children — named Spartak and Natasha — were born there. Their daughter's name is Russian, but their son's name was also given as a result of the impressions Andrea received

²² *Song of Our Country* ("We have forests, many fields and rivers..."), Russian lyrics by V. Lebedev-Kumach, music by I. Dunaevsky, English translation by O. Paul.

²³ "Sport in Russia is very well developed and the Russians are very good people".

²⁴ "One day I would like to go to Russia for some time. It is my mother. Russia is our mother. Bulgaria is its daughter and we are its grandsons".

²⁵ *Moscow Nights*, by V. Solov'ev-Sedoj and M. Matusovskij.

while in the Soviet Union: Andrea went in for sports on the basis of Spartak team and later was a fan of this team. The children spoke Russian, but in their family they mainly used Albanian. L'uba soon learnt Albanian, though she had problems with her accent. She translated hydrometeorological papers and data from Russian into Albanian.

On 28 March 1965, before going on a business trip to the United States, Andrea was arrested on a complaint. After the arrest he was betrayed by his friend: they were both put into one cell and soon the friend got all the information he needed from Andrea. Though he was accused under an article demanding 25 years in jail, the charges against the friend were dropped in three months, whereas Andrea was sentenced to death on charges of sabotage. Elpi suspects that the true cause of the sentencing was the letter Andrea had sent to Enver Hoxha not long before being arrested. In this letter Andrea criticised some aspects of life in Albania. It was not much of an outstanding event, because at that time criticism against the course of the leaders was officially fostered as "vox populi". All who took part in the criticism, however, were placed under special scrutiny by the national security service (*Sigurimi*). The family only found out about the sentence and the execution well after 2000; before that they simply had no information. Elpi sums up that period of Albanian history in the following words: "Telka budali ese sija našiti, telka budali ese, šo i studjoje sija l'udi, ardžeje pare, val'ute, i ubije kot se koti!"²⁶ In the big room of Elpi's house there is a photograph of Andrea on the wall. He is pictured with a wide smile and wearing a big Russian fur cap he bought in Cherkassy.

L'uba together with the children was sent into exile to Adriatik, a small town near the city of Mamurras.²⁷ As L'uba told Elpi, during the search the police stole her jewellery and smashed the wall of the flat in search of valuables. The bank account with their savings was closed and the money was confiscated. Only the sum they had transferred to their children before Andrea was arrested was left. L'uba was freed from exile only after the democratic changes in Albania and was given a flat in Tirana. She had the opportunity to visit Moscow in the early 1990s but declined: "What if Andrea comes and I am there?" She died a couple of years ago. Some of her relatives still live in Moscow, but Elpi does not have any contact with them.

²⁶ "So stupid are our people, so stupid, for so long they had been learning, those people, saving money, saving foreign currency, and everyone was killed with no sense at all!"

²⁷ Elsewhere I located this place, after Elpi, in the Vlora region; however, the only place on the map of Albania where the geographical names "Adriatik" and "Mamurras" are located near each other is in the Lezha region.

As Elpi says:

L'uba big, i svjete žene slave ... i ruskete, tvrde od karakter, žene tvrde. Neve i themi trime këtej gra, gra trime. Domëthënë, L'uba gu imëshe sobreno, sobrano umo.²⁸ (Elpi Manço)

Her acquaintance with Russian culture was not exclusively personal in character. Elpi remembers many Russian songs known in the village: *Moscow Nights* (Московские ночи), *Dark Eyes* (Черные глаза),²⁹ *Katyusha* (Катюша), *Kalinka* (Калинка). These songs are included in the repertoire of professional singers from the Korça valley, who sing them at celebrations and parties. She says that “ese pjesne, mu velime një, sho ti krenve, krene.”³⁰

Afërdita, Elpi's niece (she speaks only Albanian but understands some “Kajnas”), said that she also likes Pushkin (even though she reads his poetry only in Albanian translation) and recited some of his poems by heart: “I saw forgo and withered...” (Цветок засохший, безуханный...) ³¹, “I loved you, and that to die refusing...” (Я вас любил, любовь еще быть может...) ³² and some other of his best-known poems. Afërdita and Elpi also remembered *War and Peace* (Война и мир) and *Anna Karenina* (Анна Каренина) by Leo Tolstoy (they had read them in Albanian translation). In Boboshtica as well as elsewhere in Albania, other Russian authors are also known. When I introduced myself as “Unë quhej Maksim edhe jam kërkues shkencor nga Rusia”, the people in Boboshtica usually continued “Maksim Gorki?” ³³.

Mother tongue and other languages

The number of languages the Boboshtica people speak seems to be a very “Balkan” trait. Todor Manço spoke Polish, Russian, Italian and French. He learned Italian (its Naples dialect) and French at the French Lyceum in Korça, and Polish and Russian in Cracow.

From a very young age Ilo Kuneshka loved learning very much, especially learning foreign languages. As a child he learnt Greek, because he was born in the family of a teacher at the Greek school. When Italian soldiers were billeted in Boboshtica during WWII, he used to sell them *rakia* and thus he learnt Italian. Later, additional work with textbooks and reading literature helped him to learn the language to such a degree that he could conduct business talks in Italian with his clients in East Germany. During his studies at the French Lyceum in Korça he learned French. His love of this language persists today, even though he has never been to France.

²⁸ “L’uba, like other Slavic women, had a very strong character. We call those women *moj*. In other words, she had a disciplined mind”.

²⁹ Lyrics by E. Grebënka, music by F. Hermann.

³⁰ “These songs, as we say, touch you”.

³¹ *I saw forgotten and withered...*, transl. into English by Caroline Bookhout.

³² *I loved you, and that love to die refusing...*, transl. into English by Irina Zheleznova.

³³ “My name is Maxim and I am an academic researcher from Russia. — Maxim Gorki”.

to France. He still goes to Korça every month and takes home three or four books from the French library.

The remarkable fact is that Ilo almost never had communication problems:

MM: Znejte čekišt? IK: Ništo nje znajime. MM: I kako zborvjeje? IK: Pa taka... So poleka. MM: So poleka ama na koj jazik, na frenski? IK: Nja, nja, nja. Nje otidojme o pozno tamo vo skolje tamo. I čuvajme profesoro, malke razbervi, toko imajše knjigite, so erkoja μαθημα, leçon ... I taka, čuvejme nešto, pišejme šo, šo soj da reče, toko vo teknikata nema mnogo zborovi, ese svi evropski imin'a, i taka, si počnajme. Prvata godina samo dve εξετάση. Εξετάση velime nje provim. Kēshtu qē ... me upitvi šta... sakam da znam kako ke stora... kako ke moža da qarosam toz eksetas, soj provim. Beše gjeometria deskriptive. Toko taz gjeometria ima poveke decenii od što zborovi.³⁴ (Ilo Kuneszka)

In the descriptive geometry exam Ilo had one of the best scores in the course, even considering the fact that he was studying together with Czechs and Slovaks. Of course, on returning to Albania Ilo had no chance to practice Czech — he went back to Czechoslovakia only once after the diplomatic break with the Soviet Union, when the knitting factory where he was working sent him to buy some equipment.

During his stay at Charles University in Prague, Ilo had practically no chance to speak “Kajnas”, he even had to write his letters home in Albanian because the national security service was inspecting them.

On his way to Prague and back, he did not have any problems with communication either. In Yugoslavia he could easily speak to the locals thanks to his native Slavic dialect. In Romania he spoke French and in Hungary he tried to use all the languages he knew.

Shortly before the rupture with the Soviet Union in December 1961, some machinery was exported from the Soviet Union to Korça, but it remained in pieces because the Soviet side withdrew its specialists. Some units were missing, so Ilo was sent to East Germany. There he had communication problems for the first time in his life:

IK: Nemcite ne sakam, germancite ne sakam jē. “Pa, šo jazik znaete”, mi rekoje. Pa, vje ščo znaete. E, pa rekoj ja, francuzki, ruski... Tie svijā ščo bjaje od Iztok, rusite ne i sakaa. Ne ti francite ne sakat. MM: Češki? Šo češki ne zborvjeje? IK: Nja, nja, ne zborvjae češki. Ne sakat tie slavski jazici. Ne znat da ucat.³⁵ (Ilo Kuneszka)

³⁴ “Q. Did you know Czech? A. No, we knew none. Q. So how did you speak? A. Well, slowly. Q. But what language did you speak, maybe French? A. No, no. We listened to the professor, but could understand little. However, there were books with all the units. So we were listening to what he said, writing. There are not so many words in technical sciences, and they are mainly European, so that's how we started. The first year we had only two εξετάση. Εξετάση is an exam. So he asks me: how would I do... how would I solve this task. It was descriptive geometry. But descriptive geometry has more formulae than words”.

³⁵ “I don't like the Germans. I do not like them at all. They asked me, “So, which language do you speak?” Well, I said, French, Russian... All of them that were from the East didn't like

That is why Ilo needed to speak Italian to them. It is worth noting that Ilo's understanding of lack of knowledge as lack of willingness to learn languages.

The Russian language was introduced into school syllabuses during socialist rule in Albania, so practically everyone from Boboshtica has learnt it for some time. Their knowledge is passive; Elpi sometimes recalled some Russian words if she was not sure if I understood her correctly, but she does not speak Russian as such and has problems reading the Cyrillic alphabet. She showed me an issue of *Информационен бюлетин на БАН* that L. Antonova-Vasileva had sent her and I saw in the issue Ms. Antonova-Vasileva's short article about Boboshtica written in Bulgarian (Антонова-Василева 2009: 16). Elpi was surprised that there was such an article and tried to read it, but it was difficult for her, so she asked me to read it aloud, which I did. Elpi's understanding of oral Bulgarian was enough to understand the idea of the article, but she said that reading Cyrillic letters was really difficult for her. I think the attitude of Slavic minorities in non-Slavic and non-Cyrillic countries towards the Cyrillic alphabet is worth studying and here I recall the following part of Miço Kuneshka's (Ilo's elder brother's) letter from Bucharest (Mazon, Filipova-Bajrova 1965: 71):

Fati da uça rusqi! ... Dur sego znjëm da pisha, da pjëm, poznavam mallko gramatika ... So pismjëte rusqe mozhime da pishime jeziko nash mnogo kollaj. So pisme latincqe erka da storish, ne se ujdisvi.³⁶ (Miço Kuneshka)

The most impressive feature in the Boboshtica Slavic speakers' image of Europe (and Russia) is the lack of any mythological basis. The cities of Europe are mere spots on the map, and they receive individual traits only due to the people who live or have lived there and who are friends and relatives of the narrators. Besides that, it is possible that they become individual due to the resources and supplies which can be obtained there, or because they are key points of certain routes. Anyway, the basic opposition "friend or foe" cannot be applied here. Maybe the cause is that Boboshtica is understood as the centre of a certain coordinate system and the native speakers living in it are considered keepers of this centre. Basic oppositions and the model of the world have no influence on the images of countries and cities. Boboshtica villagers' ideas about Russia are very similar to those of Albanians in general, which are connected to the education they received and the influence of the media. At the same time, ironically enough, some people from Boboshtica feel closer to Europe than many Albanians from the cities, because they and their relatives have graduated from European universities and have been on business trips there.

The data I have collected also shows that the system of basic values of "Kajnas" speakers in Boboshtica is changing. This has to do with the language

the Russians. And they didn't like the French neither. Q. Czech? Why didn't you speak Czech?
A: No, no, they didn't speak Czech. They didn't want to learn".

³⁶ "I started to learn Russian! ... So far I can write, read, I know some grammar ... Using Russian letters, we can write in our language very easily. With Latin letters, it's difficult to do it."

which is losing its status as a means of communication and is becoming an identity symbol. Other areas of the system of values are changing much more slowly: education/skills and the home village with its landscape and natural uniqueness retain their high status as a value. In Sotir Bambulli's case the basis of identity is religion, but I consider it an isolated case. It seems that even after the shift to Albanian the system of values will not change very much, except that "Kajnas" may lose its status.

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Образ России и Европы у славянского меньшинства в Бобоштице (область Корчи, Албания)

Настоящий подраздел основана на устных нарративах и записях личных воспоминаний, собранных в 2010–2011 гг. в Бобоштице (алб. *Boboshticë*, местный слав. говор *Boboštica/Boboščica*), в области Корчи, Албания. Славянское население Бобоштицы называет себя как македонцами, так и болгарами, а свой диалект: "Kajnas"/"Кайнас" — 'у нас, как мы'. Я использую это же название. Славянское население Бобоштицы значительно уменьшилось во второй половине XX века. Сейчас в селе живут только 6 носителей "Kajnas"/"Кайнас", все они старше 70 лет и двуязычны, причем степень владения "Kajnas"/"Кайнас" варьирует в широких пределах. Большинство населения — аромумы, кроме того, в селе живет некоторое количество албанцев.

Особенностью села является то, что значительная часть его жителей получила высшее образование в крупных албанских и зарубежных вузах, а после этого работала на престижных работах как в Албании, так и в других странах.

Моими информантами были Ильо Кунешка, Эльпи Манчо и Сотир Бамбуллы. Ильо — инженер, он закончил Французский лицей в Корче и несколько лет учился в Карловом университете в Праге. Старший брат Эльпи Тодор также был инженером, он учился в Кракове (Польша). Сотир — бывший главный секретарь Албанской православной церкви, который сыграл важную роль в ее возрождении после конца тоталитарного режима.

Знакомство людей из Бобоштицы с Европой (в том числе и с Россией) основывается на как на собственном опыте, так и на рассказах друзей и родственников. Другой брат Эльпи, Андреа, был женат на русской по имени Люба Шишкина — позднее (как это часто происходило со смешанными браками в Албании 1960–1970-х гг.) они оба были арестованы, Люба попала в ссылку, а Андреа расстрелян по ложному обвинению. Эльпи описывает их жизнь до ареста.

Европа и Россия знакомы бобоштенцам и они ассоциируют разные страны и города со своими членами семьи, соседями и друзьями, которые работали там,

Obraz Rosji i Europy u słowiańskojęzycznej mniejszości w Boboshticë (rejon Korça, Albania)

Niniejszy podrozdział powstał w oparciu o ustne narracje i wspomnienia, zebrane i zapisane w latach 2010–2011 w Boboshticë, (w miejscowej mowie słowiańskiej, *Boboštica-Boboštica*), w rejonie Korça, w Albanii. Słowiańskojęzyczna ludność Boboshticë nazywa siebie Macedończykami, także Bułgarami, a swoją mowę — określa jako „u nas / jak my” czyli w oryginale „Kajnas”. Używam tego właśnie określenia. Słowiańska ludność Boboshticë zmniejszyła się w sposób znaczący w drugiej połowie XX wieku. W chwili obecnej we wsi mieszka jedynie 6 nosicieli „Kajnas”, wszyscy oni mają powyżej 70 lat i są dwujęzyczni, przy czym stopień znajomości „Kajnas” waha się znacząco. Większość tej ludności to Arumuni, oprócz tego we wsi mieszka także pewna liczba Albańczyków.

Cechą charakterystyczną wsi jest fakt uzyskania przez znaczącą część jej mieszkańców wyższego wykształcenia w znanych albańskich i zagranicznych uczelniach i praca w prestiżowych (dużych) albańskich i zagranicznych miastach.

Moimi informatorami byli: Iljo Kuneška, Eljpi Mančo i Sotir Bambully. Iljo, inżynier, ukończył liceum francuskie w Korcy i kilka lat studiował na Uniwersytecie Karola w Pradze. Starszy brat Eljpiego, Todor, także był inżynierem, studiował w Polsce, w Krakowie. Sotir był głównym sekretarzem Albańskiej Cerkwi Prawosławnej i odegrał ważną rolę w jej odrodzeniu po upadku reżimu totalitarnego.

Znajomość Europy (w tym także Rosji) miejscowa ludność wynosi albo z osobistych kontaktów, albo z doświadczeń krewnych i przyjaciół. Inny brat Eljpiego, Andrea, miał żonę Rosjankę, która nazywała się Ljuba Szyszkina, a później (jak to zwykle bywało z małżeństwami mieszanymi w Albanii w latach 1960–1970) obydwój zostali aresztowani, Ljubę zesłano, a Andrea został rozstrzelany na podstawie fałszywego oskarżenia. Eljpi opisuje ich życie do momentu aresztowania.

Europa i Rosja są znane mieszkańcom Boboshticë, różne miasta i kraje łączą z członkami swoich rodzin, sąsiadami, przyjaciółmi, którzy tam pracowali.

Przekład z języka rosyjskiego Jolanta Sujecka