THE LANGUAGE OF BULGARIAN COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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The papers published in this issue of Balgarski ezik are unified by the idea of presenting the peculiarities of the language varieties spoken by Bulgarian communities that live outside the state borders of present-day Bulgaria. In these new studies, one can trace the influence of the scientific ideas, theoretical views and remarkable teaching activity of an eminent Bulgarian scholar, Prof. Ivan Kochev, to whose 85th anniversary this issue is dedicated. He was the first of a generation of scholars succeeding the classics of Bulgarian linguistics such as Lyubomir Miletich, Stefan Mladenov and Benyo Tsonev to turn the study of the Bulgarian language throughout its historical territory, both within and outside the contemporary borders of Bulgaria, into his “symbol of faith”. In addition, some of the articles discuss the current state of the language spoken by the Bulgarian diaspora.

The first two papers present recent lexical and phonetic data from the dialects of two Bulgarian villages in the Prizren Region that provide further evidence on the geographical position of the western boundary of the Bulgarian language continuum. The material has been collected by the authors of the articles in recent years as a result of personal field research.

Luchia Antonova-Vasileva’s study On the Distinction of Dialects of Closely Related Languages at the Lexical Level explores the dialectal differences between Bulgarian and Serbian on the basis of lexical data from a recently studied Bulgarian dialect spoken in the Republic of Kosovo. Revealing the dialect-specific, common Bulgarian and common Slavic tiers of the vocabulary of the dialect of the village of Rahovets in the Prizren Region, the author undoubtedly proves its Bulgarian nature.

In her paper The Reflexes of the Proto-Slavic Combinations *tj, *dj, *kt’ and Palatalisation Changes in the Plosives т, д, к and г in the Phonetic System of the Dialect of the Village of Rechane, Prizren Region – New Data, Iliyana Garavalova adduces authentic, although not very abundant, dialect material which corroborates the existence of one of the most typical diagnostic phonetic features of the Bulgarian language – the reflexes шт, жд – in the dialect of the Prizren village of Rechane.

Georgi Mitrinov studies The Bulgarian Immigrants’ Dialect of the Village of Musabeyli, Edirne Region in comparison with the Rhodope dialect of the village of Viego, Smolyan Region, where the inhabitants of Musabeyli hail from. The author discusses the linguistic data in light of historical, geographical and demographic in-
formation about the village over a period spanning more than 100 years and continuing into the present day.

Based on material from the dialect of the residents of seven villages in the Tsaribrod Region collected by the author himself, Kiril Parvanov analyses the dialect’s most significant archaic features in the domain of morphology. Pointing out the symmetrical bilingualism observed in the dialect of the population of the Western Outlands, he provides linguistic data that clearly prove its Bulgarian character. An intriguing addition to the analysis are several recipes revealing unknown folk medicine practices and experience.

Daniela Andrei’s paper The Bulgarian Ethnic Minorities in Oltenia, Romania. The Language of the Inhabitants of Sviniţa as an Ethnographic Group within the Bulgarian People is a contribution to the study of the language and culture of Bulgarian minorities in Romania. The author discusses archaic and recent phonetic features of the ancient dialect of the village of Sviniţa in Mehedinţi County, which shares common features with the dialect of the village of Novo Selo, Vidin Region. She goes on to make an overview of the rich bibliography on this topic, concluding that the language and culture of the Bulgarian minority in Oltenia merit further research.

Ana Kocheva adds new details To the Characterisation of the Mixed Language of Second-Generation Viennese Bulgarians. As noted by the author, the language of Viennese Bulgarians preserves major features of the Bulgarian language, but bilingualism of a subordinate type is also observed. The variability between Bulgarian and German typical for the first generation of Bulgarian emigrants is gradually being replaced through the natural stabilisation of the German elements.

Katerina Usheva traces the interesting Historical Development of the Old Bulgarian Etymological Vowel A (Я) in the Dialects of the Southern Part of the Iso-glottal Zone (the regions of Razlog, Sandanski, Petrich, Gotse Delchev, Drama, Serres and Thessaloniki) and emphasises on the archaic nature of the umlaut in the Razlog and Thessaloniki Regions.

Simeon Stefanov studies A Peculiarity in the Description of the Local Traditional Clothes Made by the Administration of the Shumen Region in 1888 (On Material from Archive 427 l. 68a-80a). The author analyses the lexis and style of hitherto unexplored documents from the late-19th century which provide data on the way different social and ethnic groups dressed in post-Liberation Bulgaria.

The featured articles by established and younger scholars are a contribution to the study of the language of Bulgarian communities abroad that undoubtedly show that even today, whether spoken in or outside the boundaries of the Bulgarian language continuum, these language varieties preserve the most important characteristics of Bulgarian.

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Published: 30 December 2020