Nistor Bardu

Among the Aromanians in Grabova (Greava), Albania. Sociolinguistic Observations

Many Macedoromanians, who used to exclusively inhabit the villages of Grabova, Nicea, Lănga (Lunca), Şipsca deserted their villages during the communist dictatorship in Albania and, especially, after the fall of the regime at the beginning of 1990s. As a result, the village of Şipsca, close to Moscopolis, was almost completely depopulated: of the 20 houses that were inhabited in 2003 only 3 were still being inhabited in four years later. The situation was different in Grabova (Greava, in the local idiom), where about 300 people were living in 60 houses (as compared to 44, in 2003). The field research that we carried at Grabova provides data about the village, its inhabitants and their occupations, their sociolinguistic condition, as well as the manner in which the Macedoromanian dialect is changing nowadays.

Key words: *sociolinguistics, dialects, macedoromanians, immigration*

1. The title-above recalls, among knowledgeable readers, some works that appeared at the end of the XIXth and the first decades of XXth centuries, when Romanian travellers and researchers visited their Aromanian brothers in the Balkans Peninsula to know them in their own environment, with a view to informing the Romanian public on their ethno-linguistic and social condition, at a time when, in Romania, public opinion had turned very favourable to the Balkan Romanians[1]. Since 1864, the Romanian state had built schools and churches for the Balkan Aromanians, which often functioned under very harsh circumstances. We are thinking of the works of such traveller-authors like I. Nenițescu, *Dela Românii din Turcia Europeană* (1895), Constantin N. Burileanu, *Dela Românĭ din Albania* (1906), Tache Papahagi, *La Românii din Albania* (1920). Following their example, and the example of other Romanian and foreign researchers, such as Gustav Weigand (*Von Berat über Muskopoljie nach Gjordscha*, in Globus, 61, 1892, no. 61, apud Capidan,1931:3; idem, *Die Aromunen* (1894-1895; idem, *Die Aromunen in Nordalbanien*, in Jahresbericht des Institut für rumänische Sprache, XVI: 193-212)), Th. Capidan (*Fărşeroții/ The Farsherots*, in Dacoromania, 1931: 1-210, Al. Rosetti (*Cercerări asupra graiului românilor din Albania/ Research on the Idiom of the Romanians in Albania*, in Grai şi suflet / Language and Soul,

[1] See to this end (Gheorghe Zbuchea, 1999 : 45-67), the actions carried out by the Macedoromanian Committee in Bucharest after 1959, which later became the Cultural Macedoromanian Society to sensitize public opinion in the newly set up Romanian state to the problem of Balkan Romanian.

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1929: 1-83)[2], Petru Neiescu (*Mic atlas al dialectului aromân din Albania şi Fosta Republică Iugoslavă Macedonia*, 1997), Adrian Turculeț (*Aspecte ale situației sociolingvistice a aromânilor din Albania* (2003: 110-122), Thede Kahl (*Istoria aromânilor*, 2006 etc., we too travelled to the Aromanians in Albania, to gather data about the Moscopolean idiom, a distinct Aromanian group[3], about whom we have recently published a number of studies and articles[4].

The generic appellative *moscopoleni* (Moscopoleans) is of bookish origin and designates those Aromanians that used to live in the villages of *Grabova* (*Grɛáva*[5] in the local idiom), *Nícea*, *Lúnca* (Albanian, *Llënga*), *Şípsca* and the former metropolis of *Moscopolis*, all located in the mountains, west of the road that connects the towns of Pogradec (*Pogradéț*) and Korçë (*Curcɛáʋa*, *Curcɛáao*, in Aromanin), in southern Albania. After their places of origin, they called and still call themselves *grăvéń* (or *grabovári*), *niĉóț*, *linḱóț* or *lăngári*, *şipscári* and *moscopoléń* or *voscopoléń* (corresponding to *Voscopole*, the Aromanian pronunciation of the official Albanian appellative of Moscopolis, *Voskopojë*. Except for Moscopolis, once a clean and beautiful Aromanian town, famous in the XVIIIth century for its riches and culture, which, after the devastation of 1788 by the Muslim gangs in the region, in the last part of the XVIIIth century began to be peopled by ethnic Albanians too (cf. Nenițescu, 1895: 343), all the other localities mentioned above have always been inhabited exclusively by Aromanians and have remained so until today. Under the communist regime, in the sixth decade, when socialist industrialization began and especially after the fall of communism, many Moscopoleans left their birth places to settle in towns, where living conditions were better. For instance, between 2003 and 2007, the village of Șipsca almost completely depopulated: of the 20 houses that were inhabited in 2003, only three continued to be inhabited in 2007.

2. Interested as we are in the idiom of the Moscopoleans, we made four documentary trips to Albania in 2003, 2004, 2007, and 2008 respectively. Our research work focused on the *grăvéń* Moscopoleans in particular, because their village, *Grɛáva* (Grabova), used to be a

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[2] Al Rosetti visited the Farsherots in Albania immediately after their settlement in Cadrilater, România,

[3] Th. Capidan in *Fărşeroții*: 120-124, *Aromânii*, Bucureşti, 1932: 18, made some linguistic observations on the Moscopolean group, without deepening the problem. Information about the origin and the occupations of Moscopoleans, as well as a detailed presentation of their idiom is offered by Nicolae Saramandu in his *Cercetări asupra aromânei vorbite în Dobrogea* , Bucureşti, Editura *Academiei,1972: passim; Studii aromâne şi meglenoromâne*, Constanța, Ex Ponto, 2003: 27*; Romanitatea* orientală, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei, 2004: 87-88.

[4] Cf. Nistor Bardu, *Un grai aromânesc din Dobrogea*, in Anals of Analele Ştiintifice ale Universității „Ovidius", Secțiunea Filologie, tom IV, 1993: 38-44; idem, *Observații asupra graiului aromânesc din localitatea Şipsca (Albania). Aspecte fonetice*, 2004; idem, *Elemente lexicale albaneze în graiul de astăzi al aromânilor moscopoleni din Albania*; idem, *Trăsături ale graiului moscopolean în limba scrierilor aromaneşti din secolul al XVIII-lea* (în limba macedoneană), in *Зборник на труднови од меународиот научен симпозиум „Власите на Балканот*". Skopje, 2005, p. 276-286; Many references to the Moscopolean linguistic group can be found in Bardu, *Limba scrierilor aromâneşti de la sfârşitul secolului al XVIII-lea (Cavalioti, Daniil, Ucuta)*, 2004.

[5] I. Nenițescu, 1895: 448, provides information on *Grava* but also on *Voscopol*, *Nicea*, *Pogradeț*. Together these settlemetns would have numbered about 8,150 Aromanians.

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flourishing and famous burg in the XVII[th] and the XVIII[th] centuries as were Moscopolis, Şipsca, Lunca, Nicea, Gramoste and none of the authors mentioned above investigated it, although they travelled to the region in Albania whre it lies, or came very close to it. Constantin N. Burileanu visited Moscopolis, Şipsca, Nicea and Lunca and it is from the Moscopoleans there that he got valuable information about Grabova, which he included in *Dela Românii din Albania* (53, 75-76, 134-135). He met the Grabovari (*grăvéń* - author's note) settled in the village of Poiani, mentioning that he could understand better with them than with the Farsherots (269), but admits that he could not reach the village of Grabova because of the bad road that led there[6]. Tache Papahagi (*op. cit. supra*) arrived at Korcë, but his itinerary in his zone did not include any of the communities mentioned above. Th. Capidan (*Fărşeroţii*: 31-33)) visited Moscopolis and Şipsca and only states that Grabova, Moscopolis, Şipsca, Nicea and Lunca, were once a flourishing centers[7] and that the idiom spoken there was the dialect of urbanized Aromanians in Albania, who, originally, were Farsherots. Later, in the years of communism, Emil Petrovici (*Consoane rotunjite în graiurile aromâne din Albania/ Rounded Consonants in the Aromanian Idioms in Albania*, 1970) travelled as far as Llënga (Lunca) and Moscopole[8], while Petru Neiescu (1997) was not interested to investigate the Moscopoleans, his research focusing only the idioms of Aromanians in their neighbourhood, namely Curceaua (Korcë), Pleasa de Sus (Upper Please), Biglişti[9]. Thede Kahl visited what had remained of Lunca (Llënga)[10], but he was unable to reach Greava (Grabova).

I seem to have been the first Romanian researcher of this Aromanian (*rămănésc*, in the local idiom) village of Grabova, located in the mountains of southern Albania, which I visited in August 2003[11] and later, in September 2007 and September 2008.

3. Actually there are two villages that officially bear the name of Grabova: *Grabova A* and *Grabova B*, both located in the county of Gramsh, north of the Devol River. *Grabova A* is the Aromanian (*rămănésc*) one; (its official name, *Grabova Siper*, means "Upper Grabova"). *Grabova B*, (officially known as, *Grabova Posht* "Lower Grabova"), is inhabited

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[6] "Grabova is the only Romanian village between Tomor, the lakes and the Galiciţa-Morava Mountains, which we could not reach. Although it is not not too far away from Duşari, it would have taken me about 5 to 7 hours to get there, because I would have had to cross a tall and difficult mountain" (Burileanu, 1906: 134).

[7] In addition to these names, Petru Neiescu (1997) also mentions Bitcuchi, located south of Mioscopolis.

[8] Emil Petrovici, "Consoane rotunjite în graiurile aromâne din Albania / Rounded Consonants in the Aromanian Idioms in Albania", in *Studii de dialectologie şi toponimie*, Bucureşti, 1970. pp. 53-55.

9 [9] Petru Neiescu, 1997 :14. In western Albania, his research focused on Tirana, Stan Carbunara, Shqepur, Poian. However, the author also collected dielectal texts from Moscopolis, as he indicates in the „Introduction", loc. cit.: 14.

[10] In 2003, at Llënga (*Lunca*), there were only 6 inhabited houses, as we learned from linḱot Lambi Jovan Kokoneshi from Pogradec. Today, in accordance with the information provided by a Gravean, called Prokop Kokoneshi, who runs a a small business there, there are 7 inhabited houses.

[11] We visited for the first time in 1989, in the times of the comunist regime, but, because of the strict regulations and the requests of those who let us enter their houses (uncles, aunts and cousins), we could not write down anything.

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by ethnic Mulsim Albanians and, for this reason, the Aromaninas from the Grabova *rămănească* call it *Grəáva o Túrcu*.

Grabova A (*Grəáva rămănească*, as Aromanians call it) is located in the mountains, at the end of a recently repaired, winding road, cut in slate, which connects the town of Gramsh to the villages in the Valamare Mountaims (*Vălea Mári*, in the *rămănésc* idiom). The road, full of twists and turns, passes through the Albanian villages of Kodovjiat, Mbulçar, Taragjini, Grabova B, Kurata and then rises towards the *Shëna Premte*[12], the bus terminus. Leaving Shëna Premte (*Stâvínerəa*), now called Lenia, somewhere on the right, the last section of the road that leads to Grabova A (Upper Gabova) becomes very rough and almost impracticable for cars. Only a double traction and robust car, such as a Toyota jeep[13], could climb the twisty road lined by precipitous cliffs to reach the final destination. Alternatively, one can walk to the Aromanian Grabova. One gets off the bus (which Albanians and Aromanians call *furgón*) coming from Gramsh at *Stâvínerea* (Lenia) and from there one goes up the mountain on the north, which separates the two villages. One must follow the path, beaten by villagers and their animals of burden only, cut on the right side of the gentle slope of the mountain, and in an hour and a half – two hours of great efforts, one my reach one's destination[14]. There is an even easier way to reach Grabova, through a pass which cuts the mountain from Shëna Premte, leaving on the left and on the right side two huge cliffs, the locals call *Şcămbili di Grəáva* "the great cliffs of Greava"[15], but it has not been in use for a long time, because fallen rocks have caused victims among travellers.

At the end of the road one's efforts are fully rewarded, because the Aromanian village of Greava is located in a very picturesque natural amphitheatre. The bare crests of the mountains (*Ëénurĭ*) and of *Komián*, located to the west, which with its 1717 m dominates the landscape, make a sort of scooplike hollow, on the walls of which the people's houses are scattered. This scoop has two openings: to the east and to the south. The former is a valley covered with pine tree and larch, at the end of which one can see the jagged peak of *Vălea Mári* (2373m). The river which the Grabovars call *Pău di Vălea Máρi* or *Pău de la Şáρa di Vălea Máρi*[16] (*şáρă*: "saw"), flows downwards this mountain; its many smaller tributaries springing from all sides often makes the lower lands of the village dampen with water. The

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[12] *Shëna Premte* is the Albanina tanslation of the Aromanian toponym *Stâvínerea* "Saint Friday",which shows that this village, whose administrative center is in Grabova, was once inhabited by Christians, most likely Aromanians. Albanian authroties have changed the ancient name, well-rooted in the idiom of the Aromanian from Greava, with *Lenia*, the official name today.

[13] It was in such a Toyota that belonged to Todi Buzo from Grabova that we journeyed in the reagion in September 2007 and in September 2008; at the time I was convinced that only a robust double-traction car could climb along this rough raod without seriously breaking down.

[14] I went Greava along this road in August 2003, together with my colleague, assitant professor dr. Stoica Lascu, from the Faculty of History and Political Sciences, Ovidius University of Constanța, on a hot day, when the effort completely exhausted us. Thus I was given to understand why no other resercher had ever travelled to this Aromanian settlement before.

[15] The Albanian term *shkëmb* "cliff, rock" (cf. DARFSR s.v.) has entered with a similar meaning the idiom of the Aromanians in Albania. See also DDA, s.v. *şcămbă*.

[16] I would like to draw attention to the fact that in the Graveans' idiom, the liquid consonant *r*, with apical vibrations, is pronounced like velar *r*, as the Farsherots in Albania do, usually rendered in dialectal transcription through the Greek letter *P*, *ρ*. See in text *infra*.

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latter opening to the south passes between the two huge and looming cliffs, *Şcắmbili di Grɛáva*, mentioned above.

Houses made of stone slabs, kept together by a traditional adhesive of clay mixed with straw (*láspi*), with their walls buttressed by larch (*Ëádă*) beams (*brắni*), crawl on the slopes of this natural amphetheatre of a harsh beauty. They are roofed with grey slates, called *ploĉ* (Alb. *plloçë*), rather irregular and thicker than the tiles that ordinarily cover house in other parts of Europe. Hence, the dominant greyish colour of the buildings and of the whole village, when looked at from a distance or from the peak of a mountain nearby. Only the school and of the dispensary, which have been recently repaired, are roofed with undulated red tiles.

The number of inhabited houses (some houses have remained uninhabited since their original owners emigrated) has increased from 44 in 2003, to 60 in 2008. They group according to family ties into districts (*măhăláË* in Aromanian); each of them is identified by the Albanian term *lagjie* (pl. *lagjet*) "district", followed by the name of the respective family: *lagja o Barδelári*, *Lagja o BuËelári*, *Lagja o Ĉaĉalári*, *lagja o Ĉucelári*, *Lagja o Nişcolári*, *Lagja o Paĉolári*, *Lagja o Truşelári* [17]. One can walk from house to house by very narrow twisting roads that the locals call *cρáli*, once paved, but now covered only by pebbles, which only burden animals can use. All these denominations, together with others from the village and from the surrounding area, such as *la Púpa*, *la Papaláza*, *La Ĉáĉa*, *la Púnti*, *la Iáni Gógu*, *Ĉâĉóρu o Fágu*, la *Trúştɛa o Bózo*, *la Cρiúți*, *la Pádɛa o Pắu*, *la Pádɛa di Muĉắρ*[i], *la Cápu ali Gáɪe*[18] help the local orient themselves in the village and around it, while undertaking their daily activities.

4. Aromanians have left Grabova A (Aromanian) on several occasions, although the village has never been completely deserted, as it happened with Grabova B (Grabova Posht), which, according to collective memory, was also peopled by Aromanians[19]. The first wave of depopulation took place in the XVIII[th], when Grabova shared the fate of Moscopolis and

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[17] To designate the members of a family of group, or of related families that bear the same patronym, Moscopolean Aromanians use the collective suffix *–lári* of Turkis origin, added to the correponding patronym. Thus all those that bear the family names of *Trúși*, *BúËo*, *Bárδi*, *Níşcu*, *Páĉo*, *Čuĉo* , *Čaĉa*, become in the Moscopolean idiom *Truşelári*, *BuËelári*, *Barδelári* etc.

[18] The names of districts and places in *Greava*, which we obtained on the spot, and other information about Grabova, can also be found in the monogrpah of Meçan Hoxha, *Grabova, e bucura me arumunë* „Grabova, A Beautiful Aromanian Village, 1998.

[19] Turkish documents mention the latter; in 1431-1432, it was deserted, cf. Hoxha, 1998: 8.

[20] Andrei Şaguna, the future Metropolitan and great personality of Translyvanian Romanians in the XIX[th] century was born here. For more data about the parents of Andrei Şaguna, cf. Ioan Lupaş; *Mitropolitul Andrei Şaguna*. Sibiu, 1911; Sterie Diamandi, *Oameni şi aspecte din istoria aromânilor*, Bucureşti, „Cugetarea", 1940: 14-24.

[21] Today *grăvéńi* say that they all would have left the village, had it not been for the idea that no one would have afterwards taken care of Saint Nicholas chruch, a remarkable architectural edifice, which all those we met were very proud of.

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of other Aromanian towns (Şipsca, Lunca, Nicea), with a flourishing economic life, which the Muslim Albanians living nearby envied (Hoxha 1998: 52, 56-58). Together with the great local merchants, the parents of Andrei Şaguna abandoned Grabova, and finally settled in the Hungarian town of Miskolc[20], in the Habsburg Empire. During the inter-war period, starting with 1931, many of Grabovars emigrated to Elbasan and Lushnjë. In 1933, 15 families from the village emigrated to Romania; they initially settled in the Quadrilater and then, in 1940, in the village of Nisipari, Constanța county, from where they moved to the larger nearby towns (Medgidia, Ovidiu, Constanța)[21]. Another important immigration began in 1950, when communist authorities used the craftsmen from Greava, Lunca, Nicea, Şipsca to build the industrial units in Korçë, Pogradec, Gramsh, Elbasan, and Tirana (Hoxha 1998: 62, DB, TB).

According to statistics I compiled with the assistance of Todi Buzo and other villagers, Aromanians in Grabova number approximately 300 souls, who live in 60 houses. Those who left after 1950 (1952, 1954), cf. DB, and settled at Gramsh and especially at Elbasan think the only the poorest and the idlest have remained, or those who were prohibited to leave the village. Our subject Dhori Bardhi (DB) used to be under such an interdiction and had to live in a house outside the village like a pariah, for being a rich man's son (Albanian *kulak*). After the fall of communism, several families left for towns but the village did not depopulate so much as the other Moscopolean villages mentioned above. Other may have wished to leave but most likely they did not have the financial means of doing it, and today, those who have remained work hard to earn a living.

At present, their basic occupations are sheep raising, farming-to the extent the very rugged relief of the village permits it--and timber exploitation in the woods nearby. Many of them are carpenters or masons, trades they inherit from the times when Greava used to be a great town and crafts were flourishing there[1922]. They graze their sheep either individually or in small associations of there or four. The former bring their herds home from the meadows every evening. The other have arranged fold yards on the plateaus in the neighbouring mountains and take turns to grazing them all summer. Milk is processed at the village dairy, which they call by its Albanian name *baxho* (< Alb. baxho "cheese lodge"; see also DDA, s.v. *báğu*). Sheep are milked at the end of August; afterwards, any extra milk they get form their sheep is used to meet the family's needs. According to the subjects' estimations (DP, TP), there are about 3,000 sheep in Greava today. In summertime, the able members of the family harvest hay and make previsions of grass, which then they carry down from the mountain by mules (*múşti, in the local idiom*, < Alb. *mushkë*, cf. DDA, s.v.) or by horses (small mountain horses) and carefully stack in their yards. In addition to sheep, many of them raise 1-2 cows as well. To feed their animals which provide most of their food, Grabovars toil from morning till night. During the daytime, the narrow and winding village streets look almost empty. Occasionally, one can come across an adult or child driving an animal to the grazing grounds. Those who remain home toil all day long in their yards, protected from curious eye by tall fences. Some of them also have beehives, honey being a natural food the Grabovars deeply appreciate. To obtain timber, *grăvɛńi* log the trees in such a way that it can

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[19] [22] Of the trades once practiced at Greava, except for those which have survived until today (carpenters, masons) we should mention the following: blacksmiths, armourers, silversmiths, painters, burden carriers, tailors etc., cf. Xoxha, 1998: 21. A proof that in the past Greava used to be an important town is the fact that until 1946, every Wednesday, a fair (*pâzári*) was held here, where people from all the neighbouring Albanian villages came to buy goods (cf. DB).

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be carried by mules or horses down the mountain to their courtyard, where they further dress it by means of electric seesaws, but only between certain hour intervals, when the power is on. In the past, there used to be more water saws (*şápă cu ápă*) in the village, today there is only one left, owned by Spiro Stefan Paço, aged 60. Timber is usually sold at Gramsh, the county capital, under whose administration Greava (Grabova) is.

Nowadays, many youth work in Greece, where they are paid better and from where they can bring back home some money, which is a great relief to their families. In 2008 there were about 20 of them. In summer, almost all of them return home for about a month to assist their families in harvesting hay for wintertime (TB).

Because of hard work and continuous toil, which discontinue only in wintertime, Grabovars' faces are all wrinkled, which makes them look much older than they really are. Thus a male of 50-55 looks like one of 65-70. They seem to have resigned themselves to this tough life, and see no way out. However, sings of a better life are in the offing. Todi Buzo, a daring and a little utopian local entrepreneur, made the first private investments in the village after the fall of communist economy. He first built a dairy, which now processes the milk collected from individual households, had the local school roofed and a small dispensary for the village community built. His most daring economic idea has been to construct a hotel on a small plateau in the vicinity of the village. It is an alpine hotel, much searched for by emigrant Grabovars who return back home to see their native village, by amateurs of picturesque landscapes, far away from urban civilization. Tourists come both from Albania (businessmen, politicians, etc.) and from abroad, through the "Adventurer" tourism agency. Albanians come to delight themselves in eating roasted lamb, which they buy from the villagers (the hotel owner mediates the transactions) and drinking fruit brandy the locals made of plums, corns and other fruits which grow here, at 1300 m altitude. The intention of the entrepreneur, as he let us know, was to save the village from complete depopulation through this investment. Following his example, other Grabovars, too few for the time being, have returned to the village, to claim their former lands, and have new houses built where they spend the summer holidays. One of them, Thanasi Vasil Thano, who has been living at Elbasan (since 1959), but who has now returned to Greava, had a new house built on the spot the used to belong to his family. Therefore, tourism, in its early days today, could be a solution that might help Grabovars overcome their hardships. The next important objective is the construction of a micro-hydropower station near the village, which could put to good use the potential of the rivers in the region.

Due to Todi Buzo's efforts, Saint Nicholas church, a well-known monument of ecclesiastical architecture and painting[20 23] is being repaired. Grabovars speak with pride of how beautiful their church used to be and insist that had it no been for it, all of them would have left the village (see note 21). The other church *Stâvínerea*, raised on a spot of land in a former district of the village, has disappeared, after the houses around it were deserted by their inhabitants and fell into ruins.

[20 23] Altough religious obervance was prohibited in 1967, the two churches in Greava, Saint Nicholas (*Ay Nicóla*) and Saint Friday (*Stâvínerea*), were not demolished but given a different destination. For instance, Saint Ncholas chruch was used as a grains warehouse by the agricrutural association in the vilalge. In 1989, when I visited it for the first time, the chruch still preserved something of the original structure, and whose twisted colums in the atrium recalled of the columns of Curtea de Argeş monastery in România.

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Although they are busy most of the time and to not have too much spare time, Grabovars are hospitable to foreigners, especially if they happen to speak their idiom. They know that many families from din Greava have left for Romania and that they have closer or more distant relatives there. Elderly Grabovars say that *noɪ dɛ-acó avém fuËítă* "we had left fro there". Youth would like the Romanian state recognize them as Romanians and give them documents that would allow them to travel much easily to other countries[21 24]. Although they frequently travel to Greece, they are of the opinion that the Greeks are Vlachophones and, consequently, they do not feel very well in the country of Homer. In contacts they have had with Romanians from Romania, working in Greece or Italy, and in other countries of Western Europe, they realized their idiom resembles very much (*s-uɪdusɛáşti múltu* "matches a lot") Romanian, but they admit they did not stay with them for too long, to fully understand how much pronunciation in the two idioms was similar[22 25].

5. In censuses, the Aromanians from the village of Greava have always declared themselves *rămắń* yet, they are officially recorded as *shqiptari* "Albanian". In the village, they speak freely their old Aromanian idiom, frequently interspersed with lexical elements from Albanian. Often, during a conversation, they unawares start speaking Albanian. When they want to quickly communicate with someone, they use Albanian, from the very beginning. The always talk Albanian to any Albanian who happens to be on business in the village. Although, for the time being, there are no Albanian families in Greava, of late, to avoid marriage between close relatives (I, II or III degree cousins), young Grabovean males have begun to choose their wives from among the Albanian maids in the neighbouring villages, from Lenia (Stâvinerea), for instance. Thus are referred to as *buctár*^{i} or *bâctár*^{i}[23 26], that is Muslim Albanians maids, like all the other Albanian inhabitants of *Stâvinerea* and of the other villages on the road between Gramsh and Greava. However, the women quickly learn the Aromanian idiom of the family they have become a member of. Situations of bilinguism have made Grabovars speak more and more frequently Albanian, although they have not forgotten their native idiom either and still resist assimilation.

6. The name of the village, Grabova, is, as its phonetic resonance shows, of Slav origin. In Bulgarian, there is the term *ґабър* "Carpinus betuluis" (cf. БЕР, 1971, s.v.), from Old Slav **grabgъ*, which became through dissimilation in the pro-Slav **grabъ* and **gabrъ*, forms to be found in the Bulgarian toponym *Gabrovo*. In Serbian, there is the word *gr‡ba* "elm" (cf.DSR s.v.), a form that is closer to the name Grabova. It seems that the ancestors of

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[21 24] Other Aromanians from Elbasan, Tirana, Korçë, Pogradec, Divjaka, etc., expressed similar requests, especially individuals under 40 and youth who had studied in Romania, and who shared the sentiment of Romanity, but saw that they had been were marginalized, once they graduated and returned home.

[22 25] The situation was different in the 1960s, when Petru Neiescu visited he Aromanians in Albania while working at the *Micului atlas…*; he noticed that all of them "have the consciousness of sharing the same orgin as us (Romanian), and most of them, especially elderly people, have Romanian national sentiments. Many of them reproached me for not helping them; they claimed their kinfolk are on the verge of extincton and were doing nothing to come to their assitance." (Neiescu 1997: 27). We were addressed similar reproaches in the 2000s, while we were pursuing our investigations at Greava.

[23 26]The term derives from the Albanian alb. *bukë* „bread, dough", cf. DARFSR, s.v. *buk.*

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the Grabovean Aromanians took over this toponym of Slav origin, because they settled here after the Slavs had lived there for a while[24 27]. The pronunciation *Grɛáva* could be a form adapted to the phonetic system of early Aromanian, very close to proto-Romanian, in which *b* and *ʋ* in intervocalic position disappeared (ILR, 1969: 211). For the ending *–(o)va*, frequent in names of villages/towns in southern Albania, no satisfactory explanation has been offered so far.

The Aromanian idiom spoken at Greava today is, generally speaking, the Moscopolean idiom, identified and described by Nicolae Saramandu in *Cercetări asupra aromânei vorbite în Dobrogea (Research on the Aromanian Spoken in Dobrudja* (1972). However, as we showed in an article (2003: 188-189), there are some features that individualize the speech of this Moscopolean village.

In vocalism, vowel *á* sounds like *á* in the plural of the adjective *mari* (*máρi*): *fâĉóρ*^{i} *máρ*^{i}, *féti maρ*^{i} *şi* and not like *ắ* (*măr*^{i}) in other Aromanian idioms, which represents a particularity of the Moscopolean idiom[25 28]. Generally speaking, the diphthongs *ɛá* and *oá* are pronounced like an open *e* (*w*) and open *o* (£): *fwtă "fată"*, s*wρă* "vening", *h£ρă* "village" *n£ptɛa*.)[26 29]. Final *U* is not pronounced after *m*: *am* "have", *nâdzém* "go", *nâ scăldám* "we bathe" etc., which represents another characteristic of the Moscopolean idiom (cf. Saramandu, 1972: 329-340; 1984: 429).

In consonantism, the feature that differentiates the Grabovean idiom from other Moscopolean idioms (from Lunca, Nicea, Şipsca and Moscopolis) is the velar uttering of *r*: *ρ*: *aúρsu* "urs", *lísρu* „chain, lace", *ρắʋ* „river", *sâcáρă* „rye", etc. It is known that this pronunciation is specific of the Farshertos in Albania; of those that re-settled in Romania, the Farsherots from the Albanian village of Pleasa (today, Palazu, village-district of Constanța) and Pipera, near Bucharest, pronunce *r* with velar or uvular vibrations. Nicolae Saramandu (1972) did not notice this pronunciation as characteristic of the Moscopoleans in Ovidiu (a small town north of Constanța), but I noticed it with all the Grabovars I interviewed. This pronunciation may be an important indication of the Farsherot origin of Grabovars, thus confirming the opinion of Th. Capidan (1931:116 and following), who believed that urban Aromanians, who did not pronounce *r* with velar or uvular vibrations, were originally Farsherots. We must point out that Moscopoleans in general and Grabovars in particular (at least some of them), unlike the Farsherots, have settled to a sedentary life for a long time; Petru Neiescu (1997: 18-19, 30-31 and following) found the Farsherots still driving their sheep from one grazing ground to another.

Metathesis is a frequent phonetic phenomenon in the idiom of the Grabovars. Thus they pronounce *alcâséscu* instead of *alăxéscu* "I change" (DDA, s.v.); *alţânắm*, instead of

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[24 27] „On the basis of Weigand's analysis of the toponyms in the Pindus Mountains (...) who established a Slav substratum in the more recent Aromanian names, we could explain this by the fact that Aromanians settled in regions originally inhabited by Slavs." (Kahl, 2006: 104). Weigand's opinion, quoted by Thede Kahl, is supported by the names of the villages of Lunca, Nicea, Şipsca, exclusively inhabited by Moscopolean Aromanians and by other numerous toponyms with Slav resonance in the Pogradec - Korçë region and in other regions of Albania.

[25 28] For additional observations and considerations regarding *á*: *á*, see Bardu, 2004 b: 72.

[26 29] See also our observations on the Aromanina idiom of Şipsca (Bardu , 2004 a: 190-191). This phenomenon was first signalled by Capidan , 1931: 181,185-186 for Farsherots too. Cf. Sramandu: 1972: 62, 64. Such phonetic identities lead us to believe that, originally, Moscopoleans in general and Graveans in particular, may have been Farsherots too (see *infra*).

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anălţắm (DDA, s.v. *análţu*; *aşpâtắm* instead of *aştâptắm* (DDA, s.v. *aştéptu*), *-ntur*, instead of *–ntru* (DDA, s.v.): *ntur mắnă* „in hand" etc.

In morphology, in nominal flexion, we notice the formation of the genitive by means of the *o* particle, which plays a role similar to the proclitical article *al*^{u} „lui" in other Aromanian idioms (cf. Caragiu Marioţeanu, 1975: 222-223, Saramandu, 1984: 439-440) *cása o Nísi* „house of Nisi"; *âl' Ëáşu o Tódi* „I told Todi".

In verbal flexion, the preterite of the verb *moρ*^{u} drew our attention in particular, because it is not made up from the feminine form of the participle *murítă*, but from the feminine form of the adjective *mort*: *m£ρtă*: *Vasíli áρi m£ρtă* "Vasili died". A semantic accommodation of the adjectival form with the feminine form of the participle could explain this phenomenon specific of Aromanian (Caragiu Marioţeanu, 1975: 249, Saramandu, 1984: 454).

As far as the vocabulary is concerned, we have noticed that several Albanian words have entered its lexicon, which are now used instead of the inherited lexical items. Kinship names are illustrative of this: *bábi* (< Albanian. *babi* < Turkish. *baba*, cf.DDA, s. v.), for *tátă* "father", *dái* (< alb. dajë) for *lálă* „uncle"; *nắnă* (< Albanian. *nënë*) for *mámă* "mother" etc.[27] [30], all of which can be heard increasingly frequently.

Of the family names the most frequent are *Bárdhi*, *Búzo*, *Ĉúĉo*, *Cănúti*, *Nîşcu*, *Trúşi*, *Tháno*, *Verúşi*. Of the baptism names, the following seem to be most familiar: male names: *Andóni*, *Crísto*, *Δímo*, *Δóρi*, *Yáni*, *Yóργi*, *Lámbρi*, *Nísi* (*Δionís*), *Pandéli*, *Pírο*, *Spírο*, *Sotíri* (*Sotiρáќi*), *Θemístocle*, *Θomái*, *Vang'eli* etc.; female names: *Δimítρa*, *Margaríta*, *Maρía*, *Naúnca*, *Pandóρa*, *Paρaşќivía*, *Θomaíδa*, *Viólţa*. The Greek origin of most of these names is obvious.

In conclusion, we could say that the Moscopolean Aromanians in Grabova (Greava) are an interesting historical, linguistic and ethnographic reality. A complex team of researchers is needed because only thus they could point out aspects of great scientific interest of this small world, which we cannot say how long it will resist assimilation.

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[27] [30] For more examples, cf. Bardu, 2005: 705. Moscopoleans that came to Romania alternately use, *bábi*, for „father", *dái* for „uncles (maternal line)", *ģáģi*, for „uncle (paternal line), even *nắnă* for „mother", whihc makes us believe that, since they have settled to a sedentary lifestyle in the native Albanian regions for a long time, they naturally ei established linguistic contacts with the Albanian majority, from which they borrowed a number lexems (see also Capidan 1931: 207; idem 1932: 169-177).

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Abbreviations:

DARFSR: Renata Topciu, Ana Melonashi, Luan Topciu, *Dicționar albanez- român*. *Fjalor shqip-rumanisht*, Iaşi, Polirom, 2003.
DDA : Tache Papahagi, *Dicționarul dialectului aromân*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei, 1974.
DSR: Mile Tomici, *Dicționar sărb-român* (A-L), Timişoara, 1998.
БЕР 1971: *Български етимологичен речник*, том I, А-З, Издтелство на Българската Академия Науките, 1971.

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