

**Klaus Steinke and Xhelal Ylli.** *Die slavischen Minderheiten in Albanien (SMA). 2. Teil: Golloborda - Herbel - Kërçishti i Epërm.* Slavistische Beiträge, 462. Munich: Otto Sagner, 2008. 320 pp. CD, Bibliography, Maps. €34.00. Paper.

Volume One of “The Slavic Minorities in Albania,” published in 2007, was devoted to the Slavic minorities living on or near Lake Prespa in southeastern Albania (see *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol. 50, 1-2, pp. 287-288). The second, equally fascinating volume in the series now focuses on the Slavic speakers of eastern central Albania who inhabit a relatively isolated mountainous region known as Golloborda (*Golobordo*). The Slavic-speaking settlements in question are to be found between the towns of Bulqiza and Peshkopia to the north, Librazhd to the south and the Macedonian border to the east.

In their preface (pp. 5-6), authors Klaus Steinke and Xhelal Ylli explain that their original research for this part of the project was carried out in 2002 and 2003 and was checked and revised on subsequent visits in 2006 and 2007, as part of a comprehensive survey of the Slavic minorities in southeastern Europe.

The core of this volume is divided into two sections, one on Golloborda itself (pp. 9-247) and one on nearby Herbel and Kërçishti i Epërm. The Golloborda section begins with a history of the region, first documented in 1467, and its settlement patterns. Golloborda consists presently of 22 villages, of which 15 are still Slavic-speaking. These are to be found in the municipalities of Ostren, Trebisht and Stebleva. In the municipality of Ostren 2,083 of 3,769 inhabitants, and in the municipality of Trebisht all the 1460 inhabitants are Slavic-speaking. The authors provide much statistical information on the historical development and structure of the population (pp. 12-23). In the early 1990s there were approximately 10,000 Slavic speakers in the region. Here as elsewhere in Albania, however, the demographic situation has undergone radical changes over the last fifteen years. It is now estimated that about half of the total population of the region (Macedonian and Albanian speakers alike) has moved away to urban centres such as Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Elbasan, Bulqiza, Librazhd and Peshkopia, or has gone abroad. Although the Golloborda region is isolated (mountainous terrain, bad roads), it has had a long history of demographic fluctuation, with border changes, deportations and resettlements, etc. As such, the Slavic dialects spoken in this area are not particularly pure or archaic, although, as the authors point out, there may be some petrified forms and archaic elements in local speech here. The chapter “Ethnic Identity and Religion” (pp. 24-30) deals with issues linked to definition and self-definition. In order to skirt any controversy with regard to the words Macedonian, Bulgarian or Serbian, the authors restrict themselves to the term Slavophone and concentrate on describing the linguistic realities in the field. Almost all the Slavophone speakers in Golloborda are of Muslim heritage. The authors came across only eight remaining Orthodox families. Under “Education and Culture” (pp. 31-32), Steinke and Ylli note that elementary and secondary education in Golloborda takes place in Albanian since the Slavic-speakers here, as opposed to the Slavs in Prespa, do not enjoy any official status as a recognized ethnic minority. Since the fall of the dictatorship in 1991 and the opening of the border, however, the Macedonian and Bulgarian governments have offered support and scholarships for pupils whose language skills are sufficient. Several local cultural societies have also been active in promoting minority culture, and there have been some ephemeral publications in Slavic. Among these organizations are the Macedonian-oriented *Mir* society and the Bulgarian-oriented *Prosperitet Golobordo* society.

The central chapter “Language” (pp. 33-143) offers a detailed analysis of the Slavic dialect spoken in Golloborda. It is noted that children are monolingual until they begin

school, where they learn Albanian, and that Slavic is the idiom in general use at home. There are still some elderly female speakers, with little education, who do not understand Albanian well. Younger people, however, usually now speak better Albanian than Slavic. The restricted village use of Slavic, for which there is no standardized written form, has led to substantial code-switching with Albanian, and Albanian lexical elements now occur not only as nouns, but also as verbs, adjectives, pronouns, conjunctions, adverbs and particles. This chapter is followed by 15 texts (pp. 144-247) in transcription, which are also offered in good part as audio files on the accompanying CD.

The second section of the book focuses on the Slavic spoken in Herbel (*Erbeli*) and Kërçishti i Epërm (*Krçišta Gornje*) (pp. 248-282), a region situated southeast of Peshkopia and northeast of Golloborda along the Macedonian border. Slavic is moribund in this area, with only 17 Orthodox inhabitants in Kërçishti i Epërm still able to speak the language - known unequivocally here as Macedonian. As in the first section, the following chapters provide a good linguistic analysis of the dialect and two texts in transcription. The volume closes with an Albanian-German glossary (pp. 285-290), a list of words differing from standard Macedonian and Bulgarian (pp. 291-294), and an appendix with maps, lists of informants and photos (pp. 295-315), as well as bibliography (pp. 316-320).

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