

Klaus Steinke and Xhelal Ylli. *Die slavischen Minderheiten in Albanien (SMA). 1. Teil: Prespa, Vërnik, Boboshtica.* Slavistische Beiträge, 458. Munich: Otto Sagner, 2007. 374 pp. CD, Bibliography, Maps. €36.00. Paper.

The Albanian language is spoken by about three million in the Republic of Albania. In that country there are, however, several other languages in use by ethnic minorities: Greek and Aromanian in the south, Romani used by many members of the Roma community, and several southern Slavic dialects. The present volume *Die slavischen Minderheiten in Albanien* (The Slavic Minorities of Albania) is the first in a new series entitled “The Slavic Minorities in Southeastern Europe.”

According to the statistics that the authors regard as acceptable, there are about 27,000 people in Albania whose native language is a form of southern Slavic. They are concentrated in five regions: (1) Macedonian-speakers in Prespa in southeastern Albania, (2) Macedonian-speakers in Golloborda on the Albanian-Macedonian border, south of Dibra, in eastern central Albania, (3) Goran-speakers in the Luma or Gora region southeast of Kukës in northeastern Albania, 4) BCS-speakers from the village of Vraka, north of Shkodra in northwestern Albania, and 5) isolated Slav-speakers from the village of Borakaj near Durrës in western central Albania. The most prominent and numerous group is the first, the Macedonian-speakers in nine villages on the west side of Lake Prespa, together with the village of Vërnik, to which this volume, Part 1, is devoted.

In their introduction (pp. 9-20), the authors provide detailed statistical information on the presence of Prespa Slavs, contrasting earlier literature on the subject with their own findings. They explain the purpose of their research in this project, which was carried out on several expeditions to Albania in 2002 and 2003, in particular in light of the period of mass migration and urbanisation that changed and is changing the population structure of Albania drastically.

The core of the volume is divided into detailed dialect studies of the language variants spoken in the three sub-regions: the villages of Lake Prespa (pp. 21-252), the village of Vërnik near the Kapshtica border crossing to Greece (pp. 253-301), and the now largely assimilated village of Boboshtica southeast of Korça (pp. 302-359). The results of their research are particularly copious for the villages of Prespa. After introductory information on the population structure and dynamics thereof, on education, contacts and culture, and the economy of the area, we are offered a well-structured investigation of the phonology and morphology of the dialect(s), as well as eighty pages of recorded texts in transcription from all the nine villages. Many of these texts are on the accompanying CD which will be a delight to anyone interested in Macedonian dialects. Similar material is offered for Vërnik and, though to a lesser extent, for Boboshtica.

The appendix to the book (pp 360-374) provides one dialect text from the village of Lin on Lake Ohrid, where Slavic is now defunct, two maps of the region, lists of the contents of the CD and of the informants, and a five-page bibliography.

There can be no doubt that this is the most thorough study of the language of the Slavic minority in southeastern Albanian to date, and the authors and team are to be congratulated on their ground-breaking work. One already looks forward to the other parts of the study, i.e. on the other Slavic dialects of Albania. The series “The Slavic Minorities in Southeastern Europe,” however, goes beyond Albania. The second study to appear will focus on the Slav dialects of northern Greece.

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