

An Unpublished Demographic Survey Regarding the Aromanian Communities in Greece during the Second World War

EMANUIL INEOAN

“The Romanians still have many things to do in the Balkan Peninsula. But first of all they should count themselves...”

(Antonio Baldacci)

Emanuil Ineoan

Researcher at the European Center for Ethnic Studies of the Romanian Academy and postdoctoral researcher at Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. Co-author of the vol. **Prezențe clericale transilvănene la Marea Unire de la Alba Iulia 1 Decembrie 1918** (Transylvanian clerical presences at the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia 1 December 1918) (2018).

WITHIN THE manuscript section of the Romanian Academy Library, there is a document bearing a challenging title for the researcher interested in the Balkan Romanity: “Some Statistical Data on the Number of the Macedo-Romanian/Aromanian Population of Greece (Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly).”²¹ The manuscript was donated in 1963 by the author’s wife, Irina Nicolescu, accompanied by the following text:

The undersigned, Nicolescu Irina, wife of the late professor and geologist Nicolescu Constantin, hereby donate to the Academy of the Popular Republic

This paper received financial support through the project “Doctoral Research and Postdoctoral Fellowship, Innovative and Relevant to the Labor Market,” POCU/380/6/13/124146, project co-financed from the European Social Fund through the Human Capital Operational Program 2014–2020.

of Romania my husband's work, a manuscript on the in-situ preparation of statistics concerning the Macedonian Romanians from the right bank of the Danube, who are established and currently live in Greece. I believe I am making a contribution to the Academy through this donation, knowing that my husband visited the communes of the Macedonian Romanians, in order to establish their precise number. Yours faithfully, Irina C. Nicolescu.

It is not known whether the professor and geologist Constantin Nicolescu was involved in researching the history of the Balkan Romanians or whether he published something on this topic or not, including the text donated to the Academy. Nevertheless, the material covered by this study is a complex and complete radiography of the Aromanian communities, unfairly forgotten.

The Number and the Extent of the Aromanians

AT THE beginning of the 20th century, a fine connoisseur of Balkan matters, Antonio Baldacci, made the following assertion: “The Romanians still have many things to do in the Balkan Peninsula. But first of all they should count themselves...”²²

The matter related to the number and the extent of the Aromanians has always been a constant topic of analysis and it has been subject to blistering challenges in a tense Balkan world, where each state wanted to expand its sphere of influence. A quantitative estimate of the Aromanian number in the past and present is a difficult endeavor, given that the on-site censuses have been strongly infused with Balkan nationalist fervor, showing truncated demographic realities, when they were not making up certain baseless ethnic realities. Each of the peoples living in this part of Europe was pursuing, at the turn of the 19th century, the creation of nation-states, as a first stage in carrying out certain megalomaniacal expansion plans based, not once, on imperial chimeras that belonged to the medieval past (the Byzantine Empire, the Bulgarian empire, the empire of Stefan Dušan). Having such goals, it is not surprising that demographic statistics served as both argument and instrument for achieving certain political aspirations, more or less justified. Hermann Wendel, a German MP involved in the Balkan disputes of the time, believed that various statistics were used as weapons, just as a Mauser gun or a pipe bomb of the brigands. In his opinion, this kind of “scientific maps” developed by the various parties interested in the area belongs to the category of “literary propaganda.”²³

Under such circumstances, the issue of the statistical situation of the Aromanian element in the Balkan Peninsula remains, as we mentioned above, ex-

tremely difficult to approach. On the other hand, because of the displacement specific to the lifestyle of some Aromanians, it becomes very difficult not only to conduct any kind of statistical evaluation, but even to outline a general cartographic representation of their distribution. It not easy to convince the most loyal representatives of Balkan transhumance to become a part of the demographic accounting, since they often played the part of statistical marionettes, ideal for the national demands.⁴

For a long time, within the Ottoman Empire, the official recording of the populations was done exclusively based on the religious criterion, respectively on the membership in a community officially recognized by the sultan. Under such circumstances, in the Ottoman state, the Aromanians appeared to be Orthodox, governed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. With the birth and amplification of the Greek national movement, at one point the entire Orthodox mass was mistaken for the Greeks, disregarding the distinct ethnicity of certain Orthodox populations, such as the Aromanians, Bulgarians, Serbs etc. In what concerns the number of Aromanians across the Danube, some mentions were made by a number of foreign travelers, diplomats, soldiers, publicists, and others. An English traveler, Sir Arthur J. Evans, trying to show the error made by several scholars in their works, where the Orthodox Christian were all deemed to be Greek, stated that:

There are Greeks, including Aromanians, more or less Greek-naturalized. The truth is that a great number of those who are considered to be Greeks are, actually, Aromanians, the Hellenism has found a fertile ground for its propaganda among the representatives of this neo-Latin race...⁵

In spite of these aspects that were facilitating, to some extent, the corruption of the demographic process, in 1856 the Greek writer Rizos Rangabe, unreservedly considering the Aromanians to be good Hellenes,⁶ nevertheless acknowledged their individuality: “The Aromanians who live today in Greece, Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia amount to 600,000. They are well-built and rugged people, with dark or brown hair and intelligent physiognomy.”⁷ Émile Poujade believed that at least 800,000 Aromanians lived in the Ottoman Empire in 1859, a figure that was also supported in 1874 by Émile Picot, another French diplomat.⁸

Most of the time, however, the Greeks questioned the existence of Aromanian ethnics on the Ottoman territories, and other times, they estimated the number of the “Hellenes-Walachians” to be 12,000, which was tens of times less than what most of the other demographic estimates indicated.⁹ In another Greek statistics prepared by Cleanthes Nicolaidis and published in Berlin in 1899, based on the Greek Consulate’s reports from Ottoman Macedonia, the Vlachs were com-

pletely missing, being probably included under the “Greek” heading or under the heading entitled “Others with Greek feelings.”¹⁰ Ignoring the Romanic element in the Greek historical writing has been a practice frequently used to this day.¹¹ A monumental work, such as the one signed by Apostolos E. Vakalopoulos, *Modern Greek History 1204–1985* (1987), completely disregards the presence of the Aromanian community in the historical destiny of this country.

Gustav Weigand established, for the Aromanians in the entire Balkan area, a figure of 149,520 in 1895, when he personally visited two thirds of the Aromanian settlements.¹² The figures indicated by the German researcher were questioned by his own former student, Sextil Pușcariu, who mentioned that Weigand hadn’t taken into consideration the Grecomans (the Aromanians with Greek feelings) in those statistics, not considering them Aromanians, which led to the small numbers featured in the statistics of the Leipzig professor.¹³

In an 1896 report sent to Vienna by the Austrian Consul in Monastir, the number of Wallachians in European Turkey was estimated to be 771,900, plus approximately 120,000 in Thessaly, 100,000 in Greece proper, and 100,000 in Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, for a total of 1,037,900 Wallachians.¹⁴

A. J. B. Wace and M. S. Thompson, two British ethnographers, estimated that the number of the Balkan Vlachs was over 500,000 in the first part of the 20th century.¹⁵ Alexandre Rubin believed that the Aromanians represented the seventh part of the entire population of European Turkey and a quarter of the number of inhabitants of Epirus, Macedonia and Albania, for a total of 771,900 souls at the end of the first decade of the 20th century.¹⁶

Their number in the second decade of the 20th century was estimated by Jovan Cvijić to an infinitesimal 150–160,000 individuals for the entire Balkan Peninsula.¹⁷

The decrease in the number of Aromanians in Greece at the beginning of the 20th century¹⁸ was also caused by the strong exodus to the USA, the Aromanian diaspora there being well represented even today.

Alexandru Lahovary, the Romanian minister plenipotentiary in Constantinople, estimated in 1903 that there were 1,000,000 Aromanians in the entire Ottoman Empire, according to the data taken from the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior.¹⁹ In 1935, Mihail Blenche, first-secretary of the delegation, drafted a report to be used internally by the diplomats within the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of Romania, interested in supporting the idea of colonization as the only valid one in the given context. Claiming to draw on certain on-site reliable information, he was surprisingly coming to relatively small numbers. For Albania, a figure of 40,000 people, at maximum, was suggested, although they said it was an approximate number.²⁰ The official Albanian statistics provided, in 1930, a figure of approximately 11,000 Aromanians, while a Greek statistics of 1928

suggested that there were 19,700 Aromanians living on the territory of the Albanian state. On 27 March 1931, the Romanian ambassador in Tirana expressed his belief that the number of Aromanians in Albania was 40,000.²¹

As for Yugoslavia, the author challenged the official Serbian statistics of 1921, which provided a figure of 229,000 Romanians for the entire Yugoslavia, of which only 10,550 lived in Macedonia. He also disagreed with the “Romanian exaggeration” of more than 600,000 Aromanians, which circulated at that time, suggesting a number of 300,000 for the neighboring kingdom, of which 16,000 for Serbian Macedonia.²² He also believed that the official Greek census of 1928, which lumped together both the Aromanians and the Romanians for a total number of 19,073,²³ was a bit of an overestimation, because the basis for the calculation should have been, according to the Romanian official, the 12,000 Aromanians registered in the Romanian schools and churches. Nevertheless, the figure suggested by Blenche for Greece was about 60,000, only those who “had Romanian feelings” being included in such records.²⁴

Although this sub-chapter appears to be a monotonous report that compiles a chronological numerical inventory of the Aromanian community, we found it to be of no less importance when it comes to the difficulty of operating using quantitative estimation instruments in the Macedonian-Romanian matter, which has constantly been subject to a war of numbers, fluctuating depending on the observer’s interest. In this context, Professor Constantin Nicolescu’s study is a really valuable one for the research targeting the Aromanian communities in the Balkans.

Professor Nicolescu’s Research or “Truth has no Homeland”

CONSTANTIN NICOLESCU was a full professor at the Romanian commercial high school in Thessaloniki during the interwar period. This was an elite institution, financed by the Romanian state, which was interested in creating an Aromanian elite and training it precisely in the field in which they excelled, the commercial one.

He was born in Prilep, today in North Macedonia, on 25 November 1896. At the end of 1946 he was ordered by the Greek authorities to leave his job, as he was considered for expulsion, along with other teachers of the Romanian high school.²⁵ At that time the relations between Romania and Greece were rather tense, the authorities in Athens being increasingly disturbed by the presence of cultural institutions aimed at preserving the identity of the Aromanians.

Professor Nicolescu's manuscript was drawn up in Salonika, in 1944, in the midst of the world war. In the very first lines, he confesses that he has decided to "show data and figures, personally collected in this field, for several years, in situ" about the Aromanian population, convinced that, although we know "the more or less biased spirit of the Balkan peoples when it comes to national matters," and

it could easily create a state of suspicion and it could even stir, in the currently troubled and dangerous situation, the susceptibilities of national pride and that feeling specific to the inhabitants of the Balkan countries, that of chauvinism, not to say national fanaticism, so harmful to the objective scientific spirit, truth has no homeland.

Professor Nicolescu's motivation is a scientific one, but it was doubled by one related to the Romanian national interest, that of

bringing to the light of reality in terms of numbers this group or branch of our compatriots in Greece, known as Aromanians or Macedo-Romanians, in general, who have been separated for centuries from the Carpathian brethren on the left bank of the Danube, and they have lived for centuries in this large and important sector of the Balkan Peninsula.

Although he lists the valuable contributions made to the study of the Aromanians by George Murnu, Theodor Capidan, Valeriu Papacostea, or Tache Papahagi, Professor Nicolescu states that "the problem of the number of this population has not yet been solved." For the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Serbs, argued Professor Nicolescu, the issue of the quantitative appreciation of the ethnic groups in the Balkans is of strategic importance, both for knowing the "consanguine ones" and for determining or measuring the extent of the "living forces of the ethnic community as a nation, forces based on the number of compatriots" and to "assert, each in the sense of his strivings and aspirations, the right to exist and to political dominance."

Professor Nicolescu recalls in this regard the demographic research undertaken by Cvijić in Macedonia, whose political propaganda purpose was seen during the Balkan wars. Serbia's territorial aspirations were also supported at the peace conferences by the allegedly scientific data provided by the Serbian scholar.

From this general framework, Professor Nicolescu moves to the subject of his research, the Aromanians, presenting the way in which the number of this community had been reflected in historiography. However, he is skeptical in re-

gard to the manner in which the researchers, Romanian or foreign, had treated this topic: “But are even the Romanian scholars working at the Romanian cultural institutions in Macedonia and Epirus sufficiently trained in this regard? In order to be fair and objective, we should honestly say they are not.”

The critical voice of the teacher continues:

To remain, though, in the sphere of imprecision, not to say in that of the unknown, or to give a random number as a rule, more or less exaggerated just to satisfy, explicably—our national pride, would mean to deceive ourselves and to be culpable of unforgivable disinterestedness and negligence.

After referencing a series of medieval testimonies regarding the Aromanians, Professor Nicolescu identifies several factors that contributed over the centuries to the denationalization of this community:

- The irregular geophysical structure of the territory occupied by the Aromanians, which forces them to practice transhumance, having thus a great mobility. Descending to the lowlands, the Aromanians would come into contact with the Greeks and the Slavic peoples there, “which leads, inherently, more or less intensely, to the slow but inevitable process of denationalization.”

- Linguistic adaptability: “The Aromanians’ exceptional skill in acquiring, in a short time, any foreign language, mainly the ones spoken in the Balkans.”

- Mixed marriages: “The ties resulting from the marriages between Aromanians and the other peoples and especially the Greeks, which were relatively more frequent in the urban settlements, manifest in the past, as well as in the present time.”

- The frequent contact of the Aromanian population, from the urban or rural settlements, with the allogeneous fellow denizens.

- “An important factor, of biological nature, is the specific faculty of fast adaptation of the Aromanians to any human, indigenous or allogeneous environment.”

- The school and the church “have caused over so many centuries the loss, through denationalization, of a significant part of the Aromanian population.”

Such an inventory of factors is generally acknowledged by all the researchers of the Aromanian assimilation process, the merit of Professor Nicolescu being that of having empirically verified these situations, studying the phenomenon in situ and not only from the available literature.

Following the presentation of such data, Professor Nicolescu compiles an inventory of the Aromanian numerical statistics produced until 1940. He nevertheless bears in mind the critical dimension of these endeavors:

The abovementioned authors confine themselves to information that cannot be considered actual statistics, since none of them provides an accurate counting of the Aromanian population by well-defined locality or region, but rather by province or country, in a more or less general manner.

Professor Nicolescu subsequently dedicates a broader space to the analysis of the way in which the Hellene researchers, the major challengers of the issue, estimated the Aromanian percentage, insisting on P. Aravantinos's work, who estimated the number of this community's members at around 140,000.

As to the Romanian historiographical space, the author notes that we have "few statistics and, at the same time, they are inconsistent, with relatively big differences, figure-wise." He proves this assertion by presenting three researches, that of Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Travels to the Romanians in Macedonia and Mount Athos* (1863), where the number of the Aromanians is estimated at 1 million, then the study of Gheorghe I. Brătianu, which appeared in 1938, "The Romanian Minorities," with an estimated number of 100,000 Aromanians in Greece, and finally the research of Theodor Capidan from 1942, *The Macedo-Romanians: Ethnography, History, Language*, where the number of the Aromanians is estimated to be 300–350,000. Such a broad range of estimates, from 1 million souls to a few hundred thousands, lead to the author's contention that systematic researches are still needed on this subject matter, which has not yet been elucidated, from a numerical point of view, not even within what should have been the most interested supporter of the matter, namely the Romanian historiography.

The Investigation Method and the Results Obtained

MOTIVATED BY these gaps in the research regarding the number of the Aromanians, Professor Nicolescu conducted his own field research as early as 1914 when, commissioned by the Romanian Geological Institute—led at that time by Ludovic Mrazek—he was sent to investigate, from a geological point of view, the Pindos chain in the Epirus area. On that occasion, he remained there for approximately 10 months, and subsequently, after the First World War ended, he continued his research work until the beginning of the Italo-Greek war. During this long period of time, of over two decades, Professor Nicolescu confesses that he has

wandered far and wide, to the smallest places, as well as across the entire Pindos mountain chain, visiting and researching locality by locality, region by region, then Aetolia and Acarnania, western Peloponnese, western and central Macedonia,

southern Albania, and finally the entire western area of Greece—the Adriatic-Ionian side, until reaching its most southern end, the Kalamata.

The method used by Professor Nicolescu in his research regarding the Aromanians is described as follows:

During these wanderings, we thought it would be of great help to collect, from reliable sources and after performing a rigorous check, data on situation of the Aromanian population, first of all number-wise, the cultural situation, occupations etc. In order to get the most accurate information, we have used, during our investigations dedicated to this purpose, the most suitable, direct and safe path: the contact with the local, authorized bodies, which were in the best position to know the situation from this point of view, namely the mayor of the commune, the schoolteacher, the priest and any other reliable inhabitant.

Checking the data in the end—the check has been conducted, most of the times, in situ and on more than one occasion, since I have visited most of the communes several times, in shorter or longer timeframes, depending on our possibilities—we believe to have reached a point where we can establish a numerical estimate, which—in our humble opinion—if not perfectly accurate, nevertheless lacks any exaggeration, which would in fact render it useless, corresponding, as much as possible, to the actual state of things and, consequently, being able to provide us with a number of the Aromanian element in each commune as close to the truth as possible.

Professor Nicolescu's demographical investigation,²⁶ conducted between 1914 and 1940, covered three large historical regions of Greece: Greek Macedonia, Epirus (the lands that remained with Greece), and Thessaly. For these regions, we have the following results.

I. Greek Macedonia, consisting of 8 counties with a territory of 34,900 sq.m. and 1,410,000 inhabitants, of whom, almost half, approximately 650,000, are foreigners, Pontic Greek refugees, settled in approximately 950 village-colonies, as a consequence of the population exchange between Turkey and Greece, in 1922. The number of Aromanians in each of the 8 counties of Macedonia is:

- 1. County: Kozani—22,500.*
- 2. Florina: 23,400.*
- 3. Vodena: 12,330.*
- 4. Salonika and Chalkidiki: 87,000.*
- 5. Serres, Drama, and Kavala: 50,000.*

The overall number of the Aromanian element in Greek Macedonia amounts the total figure of 195,240 Aromanian inhabitants in approximately 100 urban

and rural communes, in the highlands and the lowlands, representing approximately 15% of the entire population of the province.

II. *Greek Epirus (Southern Epirus) in the four counties: Ioannina, Thesprotia, Preveza, and Arta, with a territory of 9,351 sq.m., and an overall population of 310,000 persons. The number of sedentary Aromanians who have settled in the 42 urban and rural localities together with the nomadic Farseroti stands at 101,800 souls.*

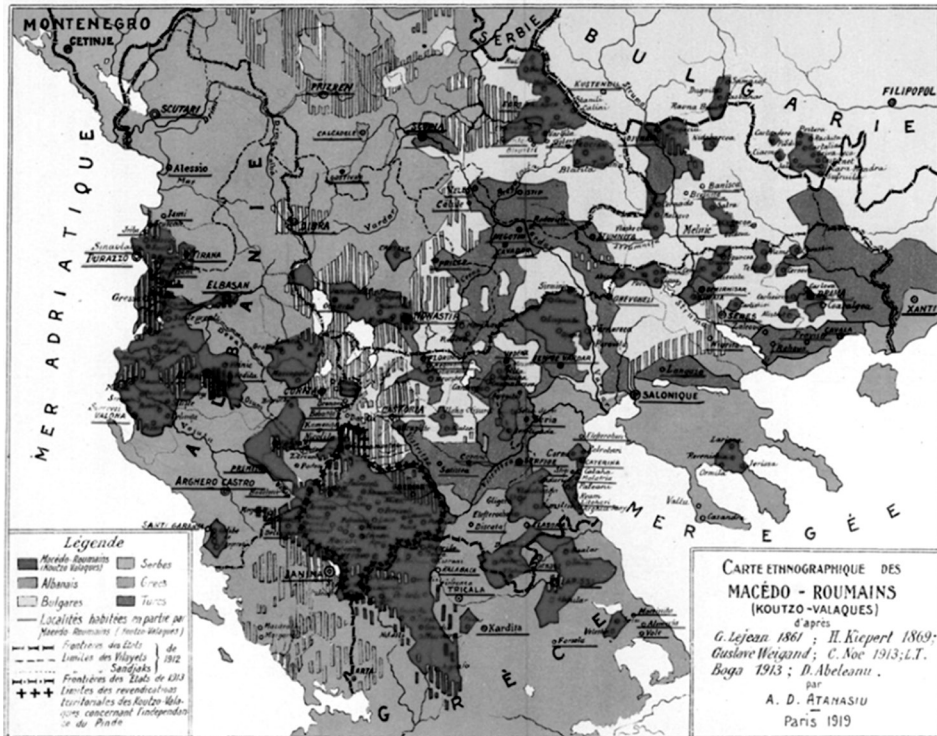
III. *Thessaly: in this region, the transhumant Aromanians together with the stable ones settled in approximately 85 urban or rural localities, to whom approximately 15,000 Farseroti Aromanians are added. The overall Aromanian population of Thessaly reaches 103,900 people.*

The author of the research on the number of Aromanians declares that “based on the data I have personally collected, for years and years—data, most of it, completed and rigorously checked, in situ” the numerical situation of the Aromanian element in Greece, in the three provinces, amounts a total number of 400,940 souls. This number includes, as Professor Nicolescu himself notes:

*together with the Aromanians aware of their Romanian ethnicity, almost all literate in Romanian, the ones called **Rumanovlachs** (Románovlahi) by the Greeks, in the Aromanian category, called Grecomans²⁷ or, according to the name given by the Greeks, Helleno-Vlachs, namely the Greco-Vlachs, who, due to a complex of spiritual factors (Greek schools and church) and due to political-economic factors, are also attached to the Hellenic culture...*

Throughout the extensive demographical research carried out, Professor Nicolescu also identifies and describes a series of bio-psychical traits of the Aromanians; together with their numerical importance, the listing of such traits proves his deep knowledge of the Aromanian community in Greece. Among the most relevant traits, we find:

the liveliness of their spirit, the bright intelligence, the outstanding dynamism, which always gives them a spirit of initiative, audacity, bravery, the impetus and skill for constructive action, in all fields, the entrepreneurship and tradecraft par excellence, then the physical strength and the worthy hard work, the atavistic vitality, proven over the centuries, the sobriety, the economic mindset and the orientation towards a good and fair use of the powers and the material and spiritual goods, the good behavior and dignity and nobility in their actions, as well as that wonderful adaptability, natural and fast, to any human environment, due to which they find their way around easily and overcome anything, anytime and anywhere, in the



The ethnographical map of the Macedo-Romanians

SOURCE: Library of the Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca, George Murnu coll.

tough struggle for existence. These rare traits essentially synthesize the Aromanians' bio-psychical profile, turning them into an elite ethnic element. This precious element has distinguished itself as such, always and in all Balkan countries, a fact that is difficult to weigh, from an axiological point of view, and account should be taken of such a fact, to a fair extent, whenever their worth is being discussed.

Final Remarks

ALTHOUGH PROFESSOR Nicolescu was a researcher little known for his concerns about the Aromanians, his manuscript represents, due to the quantitative data it provides, a singular investigation into the complicated problem of the number of Aromanians. We also take into account the fact that many of the references of specialists related to the number of Aromanians in the Balkans are mainly estimates, as they were more or less interested in mini-

mizing or, on the contrary, exaggerating the number of the Aromanians. We consider that Professor Nicolescu's research, with its very direct investigation of the numerous settlements inhabited by Aromanians, is very well documented over a period of more than 20 years, which allowed him to have an image as close to reality as possible. We can also see that three reputable specialists in Balkan issues proposed figures which practically indirectly confirm the results of Professor Nicolescu's investigation. In a paper published in 1948, the former Greek foreign minister estimated the number of Aromanians in the Greek state at 150,000–200,000, although he considered that there were still many Aromanians who no longer used their mother tongue.²⁸ Historian Max Demeter Peyfuss considered the number of Aromanians in Southeast Europe to be around 400,000 in 1970, but he admitted that in the past their numbers must have been much higher.²⁹ We must have mentioned that after 1951 Greece no longer recorded in the official censuses of its population the various ethnic groups and minority languages as research parameters, the position of these groups in society remaining invisible.³⁰ In Demirtaş Coşkun's study published in 2001 at the Institute for Eurasian Strategic Studies in Ankara, he estimated that the current number of Aromanians was between 400,000 and 500,000.³¹ Of course, the assimilation processes have continued to greatly reduce the number of Aromanians, alongside the declining natural growth, a process also amplified by the massive depopulation of rural areas and by the increased urbanization experienced by many members of the Aromanian community.

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Notes

1. The manuscript has the quota A 1689 and can be found in the Manuscripts Section at the Bucharest Library of the Romanian Academy and will soon be published in full.
2. Antonio Baldacci, *L'elemento latino nell'equilibrio balcanico* (Rome, 1905), 12.
3. Hermann Wendel, "The Bulgarians and the Macedonian Question," in *Macedonia and the Macedonians* (Rome, 1918), 7.
4. Tache Papahagi, *Aromânii: Grai, folklor, etnografie: Cu o introducere istorică: Curs universitar litografiat* (Bucharest, 1932), 202.
5. Arthur J. Evans, "Who the Macedonians Are," *London Times*, 30 Sept. 1903, quoted by Vasile Tega, *Aromânii văzuți de călători englezi (până la 1900)*, edited with an afterword by Hristu Căndroveanu (Bucharest, 1998), 116.
6. The propaganda campaigns of the Romanians, the Bulgarians, and the Serbians over northern Greece hadn't started yet.
7. Rizos Rangabe, in the *Pandora* literary journal (Athens, 1856), quoted by Tega, 92.

8. Gheorghe Zbucnea, "Despre destinul istoric al românilor din dreapta Dunării în secolul XX," *Scara: Revistă de oceanografie ortodoxă* (Bucharest) 5, 6 (2001): 163.
9. Gheorghe Zbucnea, *Relațiile României cu Sud-Estul european la începutul secolului al XX-lea (1900–1912)* (Bucharest, 1999), 88.
10. *Ibid.*, 171. To be noted are the formulations of certain Greek statistics, which didn't even consider the existence, on the claimed territory, of certain populations lacking "Greek feelings."
11. The Aromanian community in the Balkans has almost always been included among the ethnicities whose Motherlands had interests in the area (this is particularly the case of the Greeks, willing to statistically add this population). The purpose of this game was to justify certain annexation claims, without which, in case of territorial divisions, Greece would have been set aside.
12. Gustav Weigand, *Die Aromunen: Ethnographisch-philologisch-historische Untersuchungen über das Volk der sogenannten Makedo-Romanen oder Zinzaren*, vol. 1, *Land und Leute* (Leipzig, 1895), 294.
13. Sextil Pușcariu, *Călare pe două veacuri: Amintiri din tinerețe 1895–1905* (Bucharest, 1968), 34.
14. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, coll. Konstantinopol, file 496, no page numbers.
15. A. J. B. Wace and M. S. Thompson, *The Nomads of the Balkans: An Account of Life and Customs Among the Vlachs of Northern Pindus* (London, 1914), 92, quoted by T. J. Winniffrith, *The Vlachs: The History of Balkan People* (London, 1987), 20.
16. Alexandre Rubin, *Les Roumains de Macédoine* (Bucharest, 1913), 98.
17. Jovan Cvijić, *La Péninsule balkanique: Géographie humaine* (Paris, 1918), 163 sqq.
18. The decrease in the number of Aromanians in Greece occurred concomitantly with that of the Greeks, both communities being attracted by the American mirage. Therefore, between 1899 and 1912, almost 200,000 people emigrated from Greece, the peak being recorded in 1910, when 39,135 left, according to the official numbers that circulated at that time. Apostolos E. Vakalopoulos, *Istoria Greciei moderne (1204–1985)*, translation, notes and foreword by Dumitru N. Nicolae, afterword by Nicolae Șerban Tanașoca (Bucharest, 2004), 392.
19. Alexandru Em. Lahovary, *Amintiri diplomatice: Constantinopol (1902–1906). Viena (1906–1908)*, edited by Adrian Stănescu and Laurențiu Vlad, introduction, selection of documents, notes, commentaries and index by Laurențiu Vlad (Iași, 2019), 28.
20. Mihail A. Blenche, *România de peste hotare* (Bucharest, 1935), 16.
21. Vasile Florin Mirghesiu, *Diplomația în Balcani, Statele Baltice și Benelux* (Bucharest, 2001), 20.
22. *Ibid.*, 16.
23. The evidence of the grossly rigged statistics is represented by the tens of thousands of Aromanians who emigrated from Greece to Dobruja starting with the year 1925 because of the persecution against them, precisely on the ground that they were called "Romanianting," meaning they were considered themselves Romanians.
24. Blenche, 42.
25. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu and Maria Petre, *Școli și biserici românești din Peninsula Balcanică: Documente (1918–1953)*, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 2006), 629, document no. 327.

26. Currently, our research on the abovementioned demographical study, but also on other related documents has not yet identified to what extent the author took into consideration the number of approximately 25,000–30,000 Aromanian emigrants in Romania during the interwar period—Emil Țîrcomnicu, “The Aromanians in Contemporary Romania,” *Revista Română de Sociologie* (Bucharest), new ser., 22, 1–2 (2011): 157—, a part of whom were coming from the regions of Greece researched by Nicolescu, alongside with those coming from Albania, Yugoslavia or Bulgaria. We do not know how many of these Aromanians were deducted from the final figure provided by the author at the end of his study.
27. The so-called Grecomans or the renegades were the Aromanians who were hostile to the cultural effort made by Bucharest in the south of the Danube, who made a pact with the Hellenic propaganda for various reasons: mainly, the reasons related to the long Hellenization process regarding the Aromanians, which had fostered among them a Hellenophile mentality, imprinted not only through school, confession or economic interests, but also through other corrective means, increasingly violent, as the Romanian state supported more and more schools and churches on the Balkan territory. Practically, the cultural effort of the Kingdom of Romania was initiated upon the request of certain Aromanians who had reached decision-making positions within the Romanian state. In fact, the so-called “Romanian propaganda” offered the Romanians methods for resisting the more and more intense linguistic assimilation process and finally the ethnic assimilation of the Aromanians, providing an identity survival alternative in front of the Hellenizing steamroller. This entire cultural contribution, implemented through the expansion of the school and church network after 1864, provided the Aromanian community with the necessary instruments for creating its own dialectal literature and, not least, for forming a non-Hellenized elite. In the absence of such cultural support, we can easily imagine the subsequent evolution of the Aromanian community, taking as a comparative reference the situation of the numerous old Albanian element in Greece, which is today completely Hellenized. During the communist regime, for almost half a century, when the Romanian state showed no more interest in the Aromanians living in the Balkans, all forms of protection related to the Aromanian identity in Greece disappeared. The effects recorded in the censuses for this group (in fact, the Aromanians completely disappeared from the official records of the Greek state) are illustrative for what the absence of a state intervention in their favor meant. Today, we are witnessing the dissolution of a community, which, lacking the proper preservation frameworks, lives its epilogue.
28. E. Averoff, *I politiki pnevma ton koutsovlahikon sitimatatos* (Athens, 1948), 20.
29. Max Demeter Peyfuss, *Chestiunea aromânească: Evoluția de la origini până la Pacea de la București (1913) și poziția Austro-Ungariei*, translated by Nicolae Șerban Tanașoca (Bucharest, 1994), 13.
30. Riki Van Boeschoten, “When Difference Matters: Sociopolitical Dimensions of Ethnicity in the District of Florina,” in *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*, edited by Jane K. Cowan (London, 2000), 31.
31. Birgül Demirtaş-Coşkun, *The Vlachs: A Forgotten Minority in the Balkans* (London-Portland, 2001), 2.

Abstract**An Unpublished Demographic Survey Regarding the Aromanian Communities in Greece during the Second World War**

Our study aims to bring to the attention of researchers interested in the history of the Balkans in general and that of the Aromanian communities in particular a demographic investigation completed in the years of the Second World War by Professor Constantin Nicolescu. Although a researcher little known for his concerns about the Aromanians, his manuscript represents, due to the proposed quantitative data, a unique investigation into the complicated issue of the number of Aromanians.

Keywords

Aromanians, Balkans, demography, World War II, historiography, Constantin Nicolescu