

and Serbian ethnology, recalling the research done by Joel and Barbara Halpern in Orašac (Šumadija), and her encounter with the American anthropologist in the summer of 1978.

The last part of the volume, *Views and approaches from the West*, is devoted to three interviews with Western anthropologists playing the role of the *representative Other*: David Kideckel, interviewed by Vintilă Mihăilescu; Carol Silverman, interviewed by Chris Hann; and Joel M. Halpern, interviewed by Mirjana Prošić-Dvornić. The volume is furnished with an appendix presenting the timelines for the history of Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria,

as well as for the development of their respective “national sciences”.

Writing about anthropology during communism in this part of Europe is a real challenge, not only because of the lack of a critical approach to the history of the discipline in general, but also because of the lack of a “trial of communism” and thus of the possibility of a critical approach to the discipline in the recent past. However, this challenge was skilfully mastered by all the authors of this volume, which can be without exaggeration considered one of the most important South-East European anthropology books of the decade.

MAGDALENA SLAVKOVA, *ЦИГАНИТЕ ЕВАНГЕЛИСТЕ В БЪЛГАРИЯ* [EVANGELICAL GYPSIES IN BULGARIA]. SOFIA: PARADIGMA, 2007, pp. 373

*Reviewed by Aleksandra Djurić-Milovanović**

The Evangelical movement has been spreading among various ethnic communities in different parts of the world since the early nineteenth century. In the Balkans the growth of Evangelical churches has significantly increased since the fall of Communism.

The recently published book of the Bulgarian ethnologist Magdalena Slavkova, *Evangelical Gypsies in Bulgaria*, can be seen as an introduction to a very important research topic, that of neo-Protestant religious communities and the spread of the Evangelical movement among the Roma in Bulgaria. Based on her field research conducted between 1999 and 2007, Slavkova comprehensively presents different groups of Evangelical Roma, structuring her book into three thematically organized chapters preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion and an appendix. The introduction very clearly defines the requirements and goals of the research. Given the heterogeneity of the Roma population in Bulgaria, Slavkova gives a detailed account

of the Roma groups that are members of Evangelical churches: former Orthodox Christians — *Vlaxički tsigani*, *Cucumani*, *Rešetari*, *Džorevci*, *Rudari*, *Lingurari* and *Kopanari*, and former Muslims (both old and recently converted prior to the latest conversion) — *Erlji*, *Kalajdži*, *Ajdii*, *Zagundžii*, *Tatarski tsigani*, *Daalari*, *Xoraxane Roma* and *Kamčibojlii*. In Bulgaria they belong to Charismatic or neo-Protestant churches such as Methodist, Congregationalist, Baptist, Adventist and Pentecostal. The methods Slavkova uses in her research are participant observation, life-story interviews and the method of visual anthropology. Apart from that, audio and photo documentation, historical and archival sources, as well as reference books in the Romani language are also used.

The first chapter, entitled “Evangelical Gypsies in the course of history”, roughly

* Ministry of Science of the Republic of Serbia doctoral research scholarship holder on the project no. 148011 carried out by the Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade

estimates the number of the Roma members of Evangelical churches, gives a brief historical overview of Protestantism in Europe, and then takes a look at the emergence and spread of Protestantism in Bulgaria, where Slavkova outlines three historical periods: from the late nineteenth century to 1944; from 1944 to 1989; and from 1989 to the present, which is a chronology that derives from Bulgaria's political timeline. The Evangelical movement among the Roma in Europe began in the nineteenth century, when the London-based International Bible Society produced the first Romani translation of the Bible and began its missionary work among them. Under the Communist regime, the freedom of religious beliefs and practices was restricted, but many Evangelical Roma churches continued to function. After 1989, however, there begins an abrupt growth in Evangelical membership, especially among the Roma, with the intense missionary work of Bible societies. In this period Evangelical tenets have a particularly wide appeal among the poor and marginalized communities and individuals. Examining the process of Evangelical conversion of different Roma groups, Slavkova stresses that the community of Evangelical Roma is a social community, as evidenced by almost daily contacts among the members through church services, at prayer houses, the practice of mutual aid etc. The research was conducted in a number of towns and their rural surroundings in western Bulgaria (Sofia, Vratsa, Lom, Kyustendil, Sandanski), northern Bulgaria (Pleven, Tarnovo, Ruse and Silistra), eastern Bulgaria (Balchik, Burgas, Yambol, Kotel) and central-southern Bulgaria (Zagora, Velingrad).

The second chapter, "Church and pastors", lists the existing Roma Evangelical churches in Bulgaria and specifies their organizational structure. The Evangelicals in eastern Bulgaria are converts from Islam, while in western Bulgaria they converted from Orthodox Christianity. Slavkova de-

scribes the Evangelical forms of worship practices, and pays special attention to sermon, prayer, baptism, communion, fasting and evangelization. The role of pastors is also looked at, especially in Charismatic churches, including their preaching styles and speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*), most often accompanied by music and dance.

The third chapter, "The Evangelical Gypsies: Way of life and performance of identity", looks at the influence of the Evangelical movement on the Roma way of life. As the Evangelical Roma may be defined as a community of those who have embraced a faith different from their traditional one (Orthodox Christianity or Islam), Slavkova describes the changes that have occurred in their everyday life and how they celebrate feasts and festive occasions. For Roma, the acceptance of a new religion means the possibility to worship and serve God in their churches, to have pastors from their own community and to hear God's word in their mother tongues (Romani, Bulgarian, Romanian, Turkish). The religious community is a place of intense social interaction among the members seeing themselves as "brothers" and "sisters". Conversion and baptism are the most important moments, and they mark the end of the old and beginning of a new lifestyle. They willingly change their entire lifestyle and give up everything they believe God would not approve of. The newly-converted Roma make a distinction between the world of the blessed and the world of the earthly. In this chapter Slavkova also looks at how the Evangelical Roma celebrate Christian feasts (Christmas, Easter) as well as family events (weddings, childbirths, funerals), in the light of the fact that their new faith teaches them "to abandon worldly customs".

In her conclusion, Slavkova emphasizes that Evangelicalism has swayed the Bulgarian Roma away both from other Roma groups and from their traditional religions, and ushered them into a new

community where religious identity, rather than ethnic or linguistic, is central. The creation of the community of Evangelical Roma does not exclude, however, the preservation of boundaries between different Roma groups, as well as between the Roma as a whole and the *gadze*.

The volume is furnished with an extensive list of reference books, consulted Internet pages and periodicals as well as a list of Evangelical music CDs. Photographs, mostly made during her field research, are especially interesting and illustrative. It is also important to note that the author used the archival material as

well as church records. An appendix at the end of the volume offers a short history of the Evangelical churches included in the study. Seeking to shed light on the complex and challenging issue of the new religious identity of the Roma in Bulgaria, this valuable book can be seen as a useful starting point for future research on small religious communities to which many ethnic minorities in the Balkans belong. On the whole, the volume is a useful and attractive reading, and not only for scholars and experts, but also for a broader public interested in Roma communities and religious affiliations in general.

SMILJA MARJANOVIĆ-DUŠANIĆ, *SVETI KRALJ. KULT STEFANA DEČANSKOG (THE HOLY KING. THE CULT OF ST STEFAN OF DEČANI)*. BELGRADE: INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES, SP. ED. 97 & CLIO, 2007, pp. 655

Reviewed by Miroslav Timotijević*

The new book of Professor Smilja Dušanić-Marjanović, holder of the Chair in the General History of the Middle Ages and Auxiliary Historical Sciences at the Department of History, School of Philosophy, Belgrade University, is predicated on the methodological tenets of the “new cultural history” which provides a frame of reference for developing new approaches in the field of medieval studies as well. The adoption of multidisciplinary approaches has thus enabled a new approach to the phenomenon of royal sanctity, a key category of the medieval ideology of rulership. The work of many researchers, to mention but the most eminent, such as Jacques Le Goff, Robert Folz, André Vauchez, Jean-Claude Schmitt and Gabor Klaniczay, has highlighted the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon and its development, as well as religious and political specificities proper to different environments of medieval Europe. Focusing on the religio-political function of the holy king cult, Professor Marjanović-Dušanić in her opening remarks observes its long-term nature and

calls for incorporating the results of the new medieval studies into the broader framework set by the new cultural history. The need to interpret the holy king cult as a “changing long-term” phenomenon is clear and simple on the theoretical level, and it involves projecting the phenomenon into the contextualized structure of historical time.

To establish a methodological basis for testing a thesis thus posited is, however, a much more demanding task. Viewed from that perspective, Marjanović-Dušanić’s book is exemplary in terms of defining theoretical tenets through exploring a particular historical phenomenon. Interpreting the cult of the holy king Stefan of Dečani (Stefan Uroš III) as an identity *topos* of Serbian public collective memory, it looks at the original historical phenomenon from the perspective of its subsequent use in constructing religious, patriotic, national, official and popular collective mem-

* School of Philosophy, University of Belgrade