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THE *GURBAN* DISPLACED: BAYASH GUEST WORKERS IN PARIS

The word *kurban* as used in the Balkan region is a borrowing from the Turkish, but is in fact of Biblical origin. It refers to a blood sacrifice, the aim of which is to appease the divine powers and secure the well-being of the family and of the entire community (Uzeneva 2004). The custom to which this word refers is traditionally practised by various ethnic and confessional groups (both Christian and Muslim). In the Balkan countries, the term denotes both the sacrificial rite and its victim, but can also refer to the place where the sacrifice is performed.

While in the Balkans this custom is very well represented and can be found at every level of the ritual system — seasonal agricultural and pastoral rites, rites when building, family rites, etc. (Popova 1995: 146) — in Romania it was known only among a small ethnic group in the south of the country. The word (Rom. *curban*) can be found in some dictionaries of archaisms of the Romanian language, with the explanation: ‘1. sacrifice, religious offering; 2. (figurative) feast, banquet; 3. the animal sacrificed for the banquet’ (Bulgăr/Constantinescu-Dobridor 2003). Even if no reference is made to the area where this sacrifice is performed or to the people who perform it, and it is understood that the rite is common to all of Romania, a look at the older ethnographic studies can shed some light. Nicolăescu-Plopșor’s article of 1922 on the custom of *gurban*¹ clearly says that *gurban* or ‘the holiday of the Saints’ (Rom. *Sfinte*, fairy-like creatures in the Romanian folklore) is celebrated by people known as the Rudari on St George’s Day or at the feast of the Ascension. The author

¹ In the present contribution we will use the phonetic variant *gurban* because it is characteristic for the Bayash vernaculars.

emphasizes that the sacrifice is only made by crippled Rudari who have been ‘possessed by the Saints’ (Rom. *luați din sfinte*), and, even if the Romanians also believe in ‘the Saints’ (Rom. *Șoimane, Iele, Milostive*), they have no holiday intended to appease them. Further, the author says that no other Gypsy group practices this custom. This is what one of the oldest and very few descriptions of the custom looks like: As soon as somebody is possessed by the Saints, (s)he goes to an old woman who has the power to talk to them and asks her to pray to the Saints, who reveal to her in a dream what kind of holiday must be celebrated for recovery and when. After that, the sick person buys a white lamb, three bottles of wine and, at St George’s Day or Ascension, goes to a ‘clean’² glade, together with ‘clean’ friends and family. They dig a pit, slaughter the lamb above it so all the blood pours into it, and then rip the lamb open, take the giblets out and throw the offal into the pit. They boil the giblets, put them back in the lamb, sew it and roast the lamb on a spit made of fresh wood. At the same time, polenta and bread are made. When the lamb is roasted, it is split in two, one half is placed beside the pit, the other one on the tables, together with the wine and polenta. Before starting to eat, the oldest person says a prayer to the Saints, asking them to cure the sick one, who, during the prayer, holds her/his right hand on the chest. After that, s(he) eats the lamb’s tongue, which is a signal that everybody can start eating. Everything which has not been eaten, be it even half of the lamb, is thrown into the pit, together with the spit and the coal used for fire, and then covered with soil (Nicolăescu-Plopșor 1922: 35–36).³

Twenty years later, Ion Chelcea, another Romanian ethnologist who dedicated his career to the study of the same ethnic group, the Rudari, wrote about this custom, quoting Nicolăescu-Plopșor and making the observation that he himself had never come across the custom during his fieldtrips, so it might be that it belongs only to the Rudari from Oltenia (the southern region of Romania). He sums up that this custom belongs to the south-eastern folk ‘cultural circle’, with roots among the peoples of the near East (Chelcea 1944: 140–143). Thirty years later, a Romanian linguist, Ion Calotă, tried to solve the mystery of the origin and language of this enigmatic population, the Rudari, but his book was not published until 1995, due to the political situation in the country. However, with regard to the gurban, he only mentions the observations made by his predecessors and offers a few transcriptions of recordings on the topic of gurban made

² Here ‘clean’ must be understood as ‘ritually clean’.

³ For more details on Nicolăescu-Plopșor’s brief study see Kovalcsik’s paper in these collected papers.

in the 9 villages where he has done fieldwork research (Calotă 1995: 184, 186, 191–192). He is also left to wonder, as do the other two, where the name of this Oriental sacrifice among the Rudari in Oltenia might come from. Can we consider a return of the migrants? What is the origin of this sacrifice? In what follows, we will not try to answer these questions, but rather focus on the further ‘displacement’ of this ‘travelling’ custom.

The Rudari are considered as one of the numerous categories of Roma in Romania (see Achim 1998). Nevertheless, their mother tongue is Romanian, they have no knowledge of the Romani language and try to distance themselves from other Roma groups. The term *Rudari* is most of the times used as a synonym of *Bayash* in scholarly circles, when referring to these small ethnic groups speaking different dialects of the Romanian language and dispersed throughout Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and, in smaller numbers, in Macedonia, Greece, Ukraine, Slovenia and Slovakia. They do not know Romani and the vast majority are bilingual, also speaking the language of the country they live in. The Bayash, because of their semi-nomadic way of life, mentality and certain physical characteristics, are considered Gypsies by the others and sometimes they themselves identify as Gypsies or Roma (Sikimić 2005a: 7–8).

The traditional occupation of the Bayash was woodwork, namely carving tubs and making wooden spoons (see Sikimić 2005b). This is why they are often called spoon- or spindle-makers, even if this occupation is only pursued by few today. Now some of them are adjusting to village life and the tillage of the land (Orsós 1997); others still pursue a semi-nomadic way of life, travelling in order to sell different things, but the wooden objects have mainly been replaced by plastic ones; some of them ‘re-oriented’ towards other crafts, such as wickerwork; and many of them are working as guest workers⁴ in the countries of Western Europe (Hedeşan 2005).

The terms used to refer to the groups of Bayash in different countries are: *Banjaši* in Serbia, *Beás* in Hungary, *Bajaši* in Croatia, *Karavlas* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Rudari* in Bulgaria and in Romania. The ethnonym *Banjaši* in Serbia is known only among the group of Bayash settled

⁴ For more details about the variety of terms used for addressing the phenomenon of Yugoslav people working abroad see Marjanović 1995: 248 and Sorescu Marinković 2005: 202. Today, the term *guest worker* is no longer accurate, insofar as more and more of them have become permanent residents and are in no meaningful sense ‘guests’. In political discourse, the term has also become loaded, having been used sometimes by right-wing extremists in conjunction with the demand to expel foreigners and their children. As a historical term, however, referring to the guest-worker program and situation of the 1960s, it is neutral and remains the most correct designation.

in the region of Bačka, along the Danube, near the border with Croatia and Hungary. This term is only sporadically understood, but not used among other Bayash groups in the region of the Serbian Banat. In Serbia, south of the Danube, aside from professionyms (*Lingurari*, *Fusari*, *Koritari*, *Rudari*), the following ethnonyms are also used: *Țigani/Țâgani* (Gypsies), *Cigani Rumuni / rumunski Cigani* (Romanian Gypsies), *Vlaški Cigani* (Vlach Gypsies), or *Karavlas* (Black Vlachs), both by the members of the community and by the macrosociety (for details about Bayash ethnonyms in Serbia see Sikimić 2006, about Gypsy ethnonyms and professionyms see Marushiakova/Popov 2006).

It is thought that the Bayash from Romania started migrating to Serbia around the year 1850, when slavery was abolished in the Romanian principalities, in successive migration waves of different amplitudes, from different regions of Romania. However, historical data are very scarce and the lack of documents is counterbalanced by myths of foundation and aetiological legends, incomplete data, memories, fragments of oral history, old and new historical or geographical evidence (Sorescu Marinković 2007a).

The number of Bayash settlements in Serbia, estimated with the help of perceptual dialectology and qualitative analysis, is around 180, but this figure can be misleading, because some of them are very small or even separate satellite settlements under a special name. Furthermore, this estimation relies on the subjective attitudes of the Bayash alone towards the language of their community and towards other Bayash communities familiar to them (Sikimić 2006).

In Serbia, the Bayash practice the custom and sporadically understand the term *gurban*, while in Hungary and parts of Croatia inhabited by the *Ardeleni* group (see Sorescu Marinković 2007b), the custom is unknown. This might support Chelcea's theory that *gurban* was characteristic only for the Rudari of some regions of Oltenia, who brought it with them to Serbia. In ethnological studies of the Roma of Serbia, data on the Bayash and the *gurban* are very scarce. Mirjana Maluckov is one of the very few ethnologists who has described this custom as performed by the Bayash of Grebenac (a village in Vojvodina, north of the Danube) at one of three dates: Pentecost, St Peter's Day or Ascension, for the recovery of sick children (Maluckov 1979: 147–150). This custom is also known among the Bayash in Serbia south of the Danube, with a few reservations. Firstly, the term *gurban* is not always used or understood, *praznik* (holiday) being the word of choice in many local communities. Secondly, the date of the ritual differs from region to region, the most usual, however, being St George's Day (6th of May). Thirdly, in some villages we came across the term *gropaĳe* (plural), which stands for the place where the sacrifice is

performed. The term *gropan* (singular) is also recorded by Ion Calotă in the language of Rudari from Romania as meaning a ‘place where water springs’ (Calotă 1995: 218). Dictionaries of archaisms and regionalisms of the Romanian language mention it as meaning ‘large hole with water (for watering the vegetables), made in gardens’ (Bulgăr/Constantinescu-Dobridor 2003). However, participant observation in different Bayash communities of Serbia showed us that *gropan* refers to the pit in the ground under the grill, where the fire burns for roasting the lamb. We believe that because of the similarity of the two terms *gropan* and *gurban*, the latter disappeared and the former took on some of its meanings.

The village of Urovica (near Negotin, north-eastern Serbia) was visited a few times in 2006 by a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade, who conducted linguistic, ethnologic and anthropologic field research there. The village is inhabited by Vlachs, Bayash and Roma, most of whom are guest workers in the countries of Western Europe. Many recent Romanian migrants, mainly women, have also settled there or are working temporarily in the village. It must be noted that all ethnic groups in Urovica speak Romanian (this language being the mother-tongue of the Vlachs, Bayash and Romanians) and Serbian (the only schooling available is in Serbian). Furthermore, due to the fact that much of the population works in the countries of Western Europe, bilingualism has transformed in some cases in multilingualism. Thus, for example, the Vlachs and the Bayash speak Romanian, Serbian and German or French (according to the country they live and work in), the degree of competence varying from generation to generation (the older generation is fluent mainly in Romanian, the middle generation has a good command of Serbian and German or French, while those of the youngest generation speak German/French as their mother tongue, have a poor command of Romanian and almost no knowledge of Serbian). The Roma are competent in even more languages, taking into account that their mother tongue is Romani, they communicate in Romanian with the surrounding village population, attend school in Serbian and work abroad, in a French or German speaking environment.⁵

During fieldwork research in Urovica, we interviewed a few members of the Vlach and Bayash communities and also talked to some of the Romanian women working in the village.⁶ Generally, the conversations

⁵ For more details of the use of French by Vlach and Roma guest workers of first generation from north-eastern Serbia, see Ašić/Stanojević 2007. This study evaluates the language competence of the people who learnt French not by any didactic method but entirely spontaneously, from the daily interaction with the new linguistic environment, in a context characterized by problems of sociocultural adaptation.

aimed at reconstructing the traditional spiritual culture of the first two ethnic groups, and in the case of Romanian women, revolved around the outsider's perception of the local community. We were guided in the main by the principles of qualitative research, focusing on how individuals view and understand the world and construct meaning out of their experiences. All the interviews were recorded, which resulted in about ten hours of audio-material. This material is preserved in the audio archive of the Institute for Balkan Studies from Belgrade.

The first discussion with a Bayash interlocutor revealed that the community celebrates St George's Day by ritually sacrificing a lamb. According to her, this holiday is a *praznic dă nujdă* (approx. 'a holiday of necessity'), and is held for a child who fell ill because it 'stepped on Their table' (stepped on the place where the *Șoimane* eat). This holiday is supposed to mollify the *Șoimane* and help the child to recover. The term *gropan* is used by the participant to refer to the place where the fire is made for roasting the lamb, in a glade by the river.

In the following we will focus on a second discussion with a Bayash participant, who has been living in a Paris suburb for 30 years. The discussion was conducted in Romanian and lasted approximately 30 minutes (the transliterated fragment at the end of this contribution represents only the last part of the conversation). The participant was around 65 at the moment of the interview and our conversation took place on the bench in front of his house, an imposing one, as are all the others in the village, an investment made after years of hard work and self-denial in France. It must be stressed that this is part of the 'prestige games' among migrant households, discussed by the sociologists and anthropologists of migration. Schierup and Ålund, two Scandinavian researchers, in a study which deals with the formation of a Vlach immigrant ethnic community in Denmark and Sweden and discusses the reasons for obstinately preserving the ethnic identity and traditional customs, believe that migrant investments in the Vlach villages of origin are definitely connected to these 'prestige games' among migrant households, but the competition for prestige in the

⁶ We cannot speak of a Romanian community in Urovica while referring to the Romanians working in the village. Proximity or shared territory are not by themselves a sufficient condition for the forming of a community; the relational dimension is also essential, family and kinship being the perfect expressions of community. The Romanians from Urovica come from different regions of Romania, are of different educational backgrounds, social status and age and do not interact much amongst themselves. For details on the stereotypes about the Romanian women married in Romanian speaking communities in Serbia and interlocutors attitude towards the researcher, herself a Romanian woman from Romania, see Sorescu Marinković 2006.

local village context cannot be compared with cumulative investment or the quest for social status mobility in an industrialised capitalist society:

House building is not primarily a way of showing that one is richer than one's neighbour. It represents the justification for emigration and conveys a social status from which the migrant is alienated in Scandinavia. At the same time, a continued social attachment and loyalty to the community of origin is demonstrated. In this sense 'investments' can be regarded as a sort of 'sacrifice' to the community, and social continuity on a par with the huge expensive tombstones and mausoleums which emigrants erect in honour of their dead in their communities of origin (Schierup/Ålund 1996: 468).

Marjanović, also in a study on Vlach guest workers, concludes that, "bearing in mind the reasons for leaving, they (the migrations) are first and foremost 'prestige migrations', not 'existential migrations', meaning that they are, in these fertile regions, some kind of 'prestige games'" (Marjanović 1995: 249).

We quoted only studies dealing with Vlach guest workers for two reasons. On the one hand, there are no studies of Roma guest workers from Serbia in general, and therefore even fewer about Bayash guest workers. It is an unfortunate fact that the Bayash from Serbia have not been subject to scientific debate, with some notable exceptions (see the volume *The Bayash of the Balkans. Identity of an Ethnic Community*, edited in 2005 by Biljana Sikimić, Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade). On the other hand, the case of the Vlachs is not unique and can be compared to the Bayash: both ethnic groups speak dialects of the same language (Romanian), both of them are marginal communities in Serbia (the Bayash are not even a national minority, while the Vlachs attained this status only a few years ago), and the members of both groups have migrated as guest workers in large numbers to the countries of Western Europe. The Vlachs, a highly conservative and traditional ethnic group, forced by their poor economic situation, became very mobile in the last fifty years. However, among the Bayash, this 'return migration'⁷ might also be considered a new type of existence pattern which, metaphorically, continues their traditional 'wood transhumance'.⁸

⁷ *Return migration* is defined as "the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle. Migrants returning for a vacation or an extended visit without the intention of remaining at home are generally not defined as return migrants, though in some settings it is difficult to distinguish analytically the migrants returning home for a short visit or seasonally from those who have returned permanently" (Gmelch 1980: 136).

⁸ *Wood transhumance* is an expression used by Chelcea (1944: 54–56) to refer to the relative mobility of Romanian Rudari, dictated by their occupation and the need to find and process wood.

In an informal interview with our participant, he talked about his life in France, the years of hard work and his family still living there. He also mentioned that he is living in Urovica in order to guard the family house he built and is looking for a maid to help him cope with the household problems.⁹ As we can see from the transcript, St George's Day and the celebration of gurban abroad as themes of discussion were accidentally touched upon and were initiated by the participant, in response to my question about celebrating the holiday in the village. The description of the custom and its celebration is extremely schematic and this might be due to two kinds of limitations. On the one hand, the researcher did not expect the conversation to take such a turn, and amazement at hearing for the first time that the sacrifice of gurban is practised abroad prevented her from activating ethnographic knowledge of this ritual. Hence, the researcher's inability to ask the right questions added to the sketchiness of the interview. On the other hand, the interlocutor is probably not a good bearer of tradition and his competence is thus reduced, being more interested in the present day situation. His recounting of the practice of gurban in his native village is quite diluted and he constantly moves the emphasis from 'then' to 'now'¹⁰, saying that today they do not roast the lamb anymore on the fire, but instead use electric roasters and that today they buy meat products from the shops. When he starts talking about the same custom in Paris, again the emphasis is not on the ritual proper, but on the fact that French colleagues and acquaintances also attend this celebration, being treated with food and drink.

This short text raises a few questions. What has been lost and what has been transformed, as far as the practice of gurban is concerned, from Romania to France, via Serbia? Of course, we cannot offer an exact or complete answer to this question for a variety of reasons. Apart from the fact that it is not known when, where, how and from whom the Bayash 'borrowed' this custom, the data available in older Romanian ethnographic studies allow us to conclude that the custom *still* existed in Romania in the beginning of the 20th century. As for Serbia, the very few Bayash interlocutors from Urovica we had the chance to talk to (most of the population being abroad) offered only a 'reduced' description of the custom. From all the elements registered by Nicolăescu-Plopșor, the following are still pre-

⁹ In fact, when he heard that I came from Romania he proposed to me to be his maid and offered me a relatively large sum of money in exchange for my possible services. For more details about the way the researcher is perceived by her interlocutors in different regions see Sorescu Marinković 2007c.

¹⁰ This is a very frequent occurrence in the speech of older people. See, for example, Spăriosu 2006.

served: the term *gropan* — denoting the place where the lamb is grilled; the custom as a sacrificial offering for the *Şoimane*, intended to cure a child; the belief that the sick child has involuntarily stepped on ‘Their’ eating place; the interdiction on giving the bones of the lamb or remains of food to the dogs, any leftovers being thrown into the river instead or buried in the ground. But going even further, following in these modern, *reinvented nomads*’ footsteps, we must ask ourselves what remains of the practice of *gurban* in the conditions of immigration and urbanization familiar to many Bayash families? How can this originally rural practice be transposed into an urban setting?

We must start from the premise that the account of *gurban* we obtained does not necessarily render the real event, but the personal subjective perception of the speaker. Because anthropological linguistics makes use of oral statements by interlocutors, some complex rituals can hardly be documented from an ethnographic point of view (Sikimić 2004: 854–855). Additionally, as far as field interviews are concerned, the relation between the ritual itself and the personal story must always be questioned: to what extent does knowledge of the ideal model delude us when examining the traditional culture and how important are the personal stories/models (Ilić 2003: 71). It is highly probable that the ritual of *gurban* in France still preserves some of its original features, but because of the limitations of the method we use we cannot offer a complete description of the celebration.

As emigrants establish themselves in the countries of immigration and become immigrants, their ‘cultural baggage’, social organization and earlier experience begin to acquire new meanings. The Bayash leaving their homelands carried with them a consistent set of views and probably put some effort into reproducing these norms in their new homes. The basic traditional pattern is recognisably reproduced and maintained, but the degree of fidelity is expected to be reduced, due to the new meanings the new context imposes on them. Hence, the reduction of the custom on the language level (which can be noticed in the interlocutor’s discourse) does not necessarily imply a reduction on the performative and traditional level, but a mere transformation which causes the participant, in his discourse, to focus only on the elements which differ from the ‘traditional’ form of the custom.

Structural conditions faced by Bayash immigrants in France will in a great measure come to redefine the meaning of customs and tradition in the sense of ‘inventing tradition’. Namely, it is about the adaptation of the old in the new conditions and the use of familiar models for new purposes. For Hobsbawm, these ‘invented’ traditions establish or symbolize the social unity and/or membership of groups and communities, thus coming

closer to the integrative functions of the traditional rituals (Hobsbawm 1983). Mitchell, before Hobsbawm, also warned against comparing apparently traditional customs as they are practiced by migrants in urban-industrial areas with corresponding customs in the rural areas of origin of the migrants, saying that “a custom practiced in a rural situation, when transferred to an urban one, may take on a new meaning for participants and observers alike” (Mitchell 1960: 169). A custom or social practice must be studied as an integrated part of the field of interaction in which it appears. Schierup and Ålund suggest that customs are not loose, instrumental tools for adaptation, but must be seen as reflections of the social consciousness which is transformed and developed in confrontation of historical experience and social practice with the new social facts of life. They also add that:

This process of transformation is no simple product of or adaptation to ‘objective circumstances’ or ‘systems’. It represents the confrontation of active dispositions and potentials of immigrant minority groups with specific historical conditions for their development. It is a process whereby these ‘objective’ conditions are themselves modified. Forms of behaviour and way of thinking are culturally specific tools which help the migrant community cope with day to day conditions. In this context, ethnicity becomes the expression of a variety of cultural predispositions, resources and strategies of integration (Schierup/Ålund 1986: 229).

The two Scandinavian researchers quoted above write about the celebration of 29th of November by the Vlach immigrants in Denmark. The features of celebration are related to the wider field of social relationships within which immigrant experience is embedded. They argue that under changed circumstances, ‘traditional customs’ become the exponents of the new social content. At first sight, people appear to dance their round-dance just in order ‘to keep up tradition’. However, this communal locus of tradition helps develop ethnic consciousness, thus generating new forms of collective behaviour. Probably 6th of May (St George’s Day) and gurban, as a social gathering, have for the Bayash the same function as the Vlachs’ celebration, bridging historical and social time, uniting the consciousness of common historical origin with the insight of shared present experience.

It might be possible that the ritual in present-day France is only an occasion to meet, where people demonstrate their adherence to a common identity. Similar to the Vlach immigrants, the Bayash also assume a Yugoslav identity abroad.¹¹ Thus, they symbolically raise themselves from the level of a marginalized and even ridiculed minority in the ex-Yugoslav

¹¹ Williams commented upon the special ties between the Serbian Roma from Paris and the other Serbians living in the capital of France, noticing that probably the situation

context to the level of a 'national Yugoslav tradition', most probably combining elements of the 'Yugoslav' celebration of Djurdjevdan (St George's Day) and Bayash gurban. In other words, the urban ritual overcomes, at the same time, the spatial dispersion and segmentation of social relationships by gathering members of the Bayash community, Yugoslav immigrants, together with friends or colleagues from the country of adoption. Thus, the 'naturalization' of the ritual transferred into a new context and the 'ritualization' of social relationships among guest workers which appear in an urban area (Werbner 1988: 80) take on the form of picturesque folklore. Folklore plays the function of an unthreatening exoticism and escapism from everyday life in the increasingly standardized French and Western society in general. Therefore, in the eyes of the French natives, this 'traditional' custom might be the most legitimate expression of 'immigrant culture' and a favorite medium of cross-cultural communication. "Radical urbanization, emigration and other modernization processes", which resulted in a "rather growing limitation of usage of kurban" in some communities,¹² in the case of the Bayash provoked the exact opposite phenomenon, namely the reinvention or reinforcement of the custom.

Another question raised by the short fragment from the participant's discourse is why this celebration is carried away abroad and not practised in the land of origin? In other words, why are some customs 'displaced' and how do they function in the new environment? In order to answer it, we must note that celebrations in the region of origin are especially lively during summer and winter holidays when the villages are revived by the presence of vacationing migrants. All important rites of the migrants are firmly tied to the homeland. Schierup/Ålund, talking about the Vlach guest workers in Scandinavia, noted that "to our knowledge, not a single Wallachian wedding, baptism, burial or *pomana* took place in Scandinavia during the two decades of migrancy" (Schierup and Ålund 1996: 469). It is a fact that short term labour migrants rarely perform certain ritual acts away from home. Nevertheless, as the migrants' stay is prolonged and extended, there is a shift in their symbolic orientation. Compelling reasons grounded in migrants' beliefs and current circumstances create a need to make offerings and sacrifices away from home (Werbner 1988: 94). One of the possible reasons for performing the ritual of gurban in Paris might be its date. As we said before, the migrants usually return home for summer and winter holidays, so they are compelled to celebrate this spring

of being immigrants, being strangers, reinforces the ties between the Serbian Gadze and Roma (Williams 2003: 30).

¹² See Halili's study in the present volume.

holiday in the adoptive country. Also, migrants vary in their 'rootedness', in their very perception of where home is. If important rituals which regulate the life of the community are carried out in the adoptive country, this can be a sign that 'home' is slowly moving away to 'abroad'.

The cultural dynamics implicit here lead us to think that the 'displacement' of gurban leads not to a loss of function of the custom, but to the transformation of the cultural heritage of the migrants in accordance with the new environment. This study, mainly based on the oral statements of one person, could represent the starting point for ethnologic and anthropologic research in France, the Bayash's adoptive country, at the other end of the so-called displacement chain (as Schierup/Ålund 1986, Brisebarre 1993 and Werbner 1988 did in their studies on the migrants), without which we cannot completely understand the phenomenon.

Transcript:¹³

(Here Saint George's Day is the most beautiful holiday, isn't it?)

Yes. Saint George's Day. Now in August everybody comes from France for vacation, to us. France, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, all our people get together here, for a month.

(Do you slaughter a lamb for Saint George's Day?)

Yes, yes.

(I heard from an old woman here in the village that before there were *gropańe*.)

Yes, yes.

(Where were these *gropańe*?)

What do you mean by *gropańe*?

(*Gropańe* where you make the fire...)

Yes, you make a nice *gropan*, you light the fire for the lamb and... Now we are not roasting manually anymore, but have electrical roasters.

(But before you were roasting manually.)

Yes, before we were roasting manually.

(And what do you call *gropan*, what was a *gropan*?)

You make, you know, for example, *gropan* here, like this, here, like this (he draws circles on the ground).

(I see.)

And you make the fire there and there are embers, fire, when the wood is burnt, completely, and you roast the lamb gradually.

¹³ The researcher's questions are put in brackets.

(I see.)

You grill it nice and brown. If you took a bite, you'd love it. But now we have also started to buy from the shops, salami. Ok, now I'm alone...

(I see.)

Yes.

(But the bones, I heard you were not allowed to give the bones away to the dogs.)

No.

(No.)

No, we would throw them in the river.

(In the river.)

Yes.

(How would you translate *gropan* in Serbian?)

Well...

(Is it a hole?)

Hole.

(Hole.)

Hole, of course. Yes.

(You haven't heard of *gurban*.)

I haven't.

(No. *Gropan*.)

E, there the French people would come to us, in France, when we roasted lambs in a nice glade...

(You would also roast lambs there?)

Yees. What do you think?

(Where can you do something like that in France?)

Eee, we have a glade there. It's called Châtenay-Malabry (?).

(How?)

Châtenay-Malabry (?), Division Leclerc. Yes. There we would stand in lines. All of us, the Yugoslavs, the Serbs, would roast lambs there. And they would come to us, for example, my boss would come to me, my acquaintances, my people would come to me. Yes. They would have lunch, have something to drink, everything. And after that they would leave. We would give them some meat in a bag, because it's nice, it's fair like this.

(And you would also throw the bones in the water there?)

Yes, yes.

(What kind of water is there?)

Well, there is some water. And we would throw the bones in it.

(Would you also slaughter the lambs there?)

Yes, yes. We would sacrifice them there, everything, there at the *grobana*, there, sacrifice them there and the blood would pour there...

(In France?)

Yes, you have my word. Yes, yes. I'm not lying to you.

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