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*The Romance-speaking Balkans: Language and the Politics of Identity*, Eds., Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković, Mihai Dragnea, Thede Kahl, Blagovest Njagulov, Donald L. Dyer and Angelo Costanzo
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*Reviewed by* Panagiotis G. Krimpas*

A very interesting volume was published last year that deserves more attention. *The Romance-Speaking Balkans: Language and the Politics of Identity*, edited by six scholars with benchmark work in various areas of Balkan studies, namely Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković, Mihai Dragnea, Thede Kahl, Blagovest Njagulov, Donald L. Dyer, and Angelo Costanzo is the research outcome of a project conceived and implemented by the Balkan History Association (Bucharest, Romania), as stated in the Preface. The names of the editors and the contributors guarantee the high quality of the nine contributions contained in the volume, which became the research meeting point of linguists, sociolinguists, anthropologists, ethnographers, ethnic studies theorists, historians, and political scientists. In other words, the volume is a genuinely interdisciplinary work, which can shed light on less studied aspects of South-East European cultural heritage as an integral part of the overall European cultural space. The volume traces back the history of such Romance-speaking groups in Southeastern Europe and discusses cultural and (geo-)political challenges they have faced from time to time in the context of their co-existence with non Romance speakers in the various Balkan states. By discussing both the construction and deconstruction of individual and group identities in their engagement with nationhood, the contributors to the volume explore the ways in which the identity of the Romance-speaking communities has been interpreted and performed in the Balkans. The nine chapters of this volume discuss the role of language for identity construction in modern states and how it is instrumentalised by various actors such as religious authorities, political parties and their ilk in their attempt to exploit it as a sign of loyalty to national states and their geopolitical goals.

One of the co-editors of the volume, Mihai Dragnea, who is an Associate researcher of the University of South-Eastern Norway, Chair of Balkan History Association and Editor-in-Chief of *Hiperboreea* Journal, is the author of the Preface (pp. VII–VIII), where he describes the origins and the general research context that unites the nine contributions under the general topic of the book. There follow some notes on the contributors and an Introduction (pp. 1–11) by the co-editors of the volume, where they briefly introduce the reader to the basics of each chapter.

The first chapter, titled *From Rashi to Cyrillic: Bulgarian Judeo-Spanish (Judezmo) Texts in Cyrillic* (pp. 12–37) has been written by the psycholinguist, Romance linguist and Jewish Studies scholar Michael Studemund-Halévy (Prix Alberto Benveniste), a research associate at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Studies, University of Hamburg. Studemund-Halévy's main foci are, on the one hand, the history of writing Judeo-Spanish in a particular alphabet, namely the Cyrillic and, on the other hand, the use of Judeo-Spanish in Bulgaria during

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the 20th century. The author starts his contribution by pointing out that choices of scripts and languages are conscious acts and orthographical conventions are 'culturemes' in Oksaar's terminolgy, i.e. external signs of collective belonging to specific religious or cultural communities. He then briefly discusses the historical use of various scripts in languages of the Balkans, including Judeo-Spanish. Studemund-Halévy accompanies his contribution with lots of commented examples of Judeo-Spanish texts written in different scripts. His corpus (pp. 22–71) consists of printed sources produced at the turn of the 20th century and published in Sofia, Ruse, Varna and represents different varieties of Judezmo as spoken and written in Bulgaria. As he explains (p. 22), the sources exemplify diatopic, diastratic, diaphasic, and diamesic elements and are a so far neglected source of information about the history of the Bulgarian Judezmo writing system, which was an orthography in transition. An interesting point is that Rabbi Pipanos' dictionary, which reflects popular local Judezmo, shows a strong Italo-Gallic relexification, which suggest Westernisation and modernisation to the detriment of the local language (p. 23). Some typos obviously due to some software incompatibility (namely Анишатитийотеръмупчо instead of Ани шатити йотеръ мидай, and Ененишотеодъ instead of Енени шоте одъ, see p. 26) could have been avoided, but this by no means diminish the high quality and value of the chapter. The author concludes that the Cyrillic alphabet may be used as a convenient reference in transliteration of Judezmo texts from *Rashi* into Latin letters and reminds that any script can be applied to any number of languages, no matter their genetic and/or typological proximity, with no change in the structural textual features; at the same time, he underlines the interesting fact that script multiplicity in languages once spoken in various countries, as is the case of Judezmo, may often reveal phonetic traits of local variation, which would else remain hidden if the same script was applied throughout the Judezmo-speaking territory (p. 31).

Independent scholar and identity rhetorics specialist Cătălin Mamali, PhD (University of Bucharest) and former Fulbright scholar at the University of Iowa, where he is currently associated with Project on Rhetoric of Inquiry is the author of the second chapter, titled *Political Terror and Repressed Aromanian Core Identity: Ways to Re-assert and Develop Ethnolinguistic Identity* (pp. 38–76). Setting off to explore Aromanian identity, Cătălin Mamali points out that, although disaffiliation from political, military, social and religious institutions is possible, separation of individuals and communities from their internalised cultural matrix is impracticable. By citing other scholars' previous work, he underlines that the persistence of mother tongues within communities are signs of ethnolinguistic vitality, which in its turn is essential for the construction of ethnolinguistic identity. The author thus reaffirms the interdependence between language and identity, a much-discussed connection that has been proven to be true or false under different historical and sociopolitical circumstances. He also reminds the importance of Sir F. C. Bartlett's 'constructive memory' in identity construction and includes a very interesting graphic illustration (p. 45) of what he calls the holistic and dynamic nature of individual identity and collective identity rooted in the related questions "Who am I?" and "Who are We?" The author extensively discusses theoretical, empirical, political, and moral challenges posed by Aromanian identity, based on previous research by T. Kahl and others; Mamali there suggests that Aromanian identity is virtually neglected (or even concealed) by both Romania and Greece in relevant discussions and research and recalls Kahl's justified view that 'Aromanians engaged in trade and agriculture followed a clear path of assimilation, while those engaged in pastoral activities tended to retain

their Aromanian-ness'. He is right in asserting that 'If the Aromanians, as most other minorities (either autochthons or newcomers), pose challenging questions to the host/majority nation about its identity, in turn the majority poses difficult questions to the minorities by resorting to policies of forced assimilation.' In discussing Islamisation of some East Romance-speaking groups, the author recalls a very real fact usually downplayed in politically 'correct' speech: that historical data clearly suggest that Islamisation process under the Ottoman Empire was more often than not violent (pp. 55-56). An interesting view extensively discussed by the author is that collaboration of various Aromanian groups with fascism and Nazism was the reaction to the extreme oppression of Aromanians by communist regimes and groups in the Balkans and the ex-Soviet Union, which points to a totalitarian vicious circle. Mamali concludes that linguistic, cultural and financial measures are to be taken in order to repair the damages done to the Aromanian identity.

The title of the third chapter is *Sociolinguistic Relations and Return Migration: Italian in the Republic of Moldova* (pp. 77–115) and its author is the linguist Anna-Christine Weirich, PhD, currently a research assistant at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt am Main. A very innovative piece of research, this contribution explores for the first time the relationship between language change and migration in Moldova in the light of findings related to the migration of many Moldovans to Italy and the presence of an Italian minority in Moldova. Anna-Christine Weirich reports (p. 80) that contact phenomena involving Italian have become subject to normative and purist discourses on language use in Moldova, as well as that almost no research has been previously undertaken with respect to the contribution of migration to language change in that country. By summarising the various historical and present roles of Italian in Moldova, she proceeds to discussing the topic in the light of linguistics of migration, sociolinguistics of globalisation and linguistic relations, drawing mostly on T. Krefeld, J. Blommaert, U. Maas, and K. Bochmann's works and on her own previous research. She accurately describes the linguistic situation in post-Soviet Moldova by updating previous information about the issue, while her table one the 'Differentiation of registers in several languages in the contemporary Republic of Moldova' (p. 86), originating in her previous work is very useful. Weirich then explores the Ligurian origins of the almost unknown Italian community of the Republic of Moldova back to 1880, which proves that Moldova was itself chosen as a place of migration even by 'Western' Europeans. She uses examples from genuine language usage by Moldovan immigrants to Italy who return to Moldova with their speech influenced by the speech of the host country and recalls L. Zeevaert & J. D. ten Thije's concept of receptive multilingualism. She gives interesting lexical, syntactic and phonetic examples (pp. 100-107) of Romanian (Moldovan) ~ Italian code-switching such as *appuntament* (< It. *appuntamento*), *a soggiorna* (< It. *soggiornare*), overlengthening of stressed vowels etc, as well as of Russian ~ Italian code-switching such as *stranierov* (< *stranieri*). Her information about Moldovan immigrants to Italy turning the Italian suffix *-mento* into *-ment* (p. 102) or substituting *quale* for *care* in one idiom-like expression (pp. 104-105) suggests, in my opinion, that awareness of similarities between Modovan (Romanian) and Italian, being both Romance languages, facilitates the process.

Ewa Nowicka, who is *inter alia* a social anthropologist and sociologist, as well as founder of the Department of Social Anthropology at the Institute of Sociology in the University of Warsaw is the author of the fourth chapter, titled *Between Ethnicity, Regionalism, and Familial Memory: Identity Dilemmas among the Eastern Romance Communities of the Balkan Peninsula* (pp. 116–145). She opens her contribution by

reminding that "the responsibility of a social scientist is to perceive vanishing, endangered cultures, and to warn about their disappearance by shining light on the significance, as well as the consequences of a shrinking cultural pluralism in the world." To corroborate her argument, she cites G. Marghescu's comparison of this task to the actions of ecologists who "warn us of the risks of the diminishing of the biological diversity". Importantly, Nowicka's contribution is the outcome of on-site anthropological fieldwork conducted from 2010 to 2019. Throughout her chapter, she knowingly uses the conventional names of non-Romanian Eastern Romance-speaking groups of the Balkans, namely *Vlach*, *Aromanian*, *Meglen Vlach*, and *Istro-Romanian*, although she admits their rather arbitrary and at times exonymic character. She points out that Romance-speaking groups in the Balkans have almost never had ambitions to some distinctive political entity of their own with the exception of the fascist, ephemeral "Principality of the Pindus," about which she cites (p. 117 footnote 4) Nitsiakos *et al*. Although Eastern Romance-speakers are to be found in almost any Balkan country, Nowicka limits her discussion to current Greece, Serbia, and Croatia (namely the Istrian Peninsula) because, in her opinion, it is there where various situations and types of identity strategies are most clearly manifested by Eastern Romance-speaking minorities (p. 118). Her discussion about the status and perceptions of Vlachs in Greece (pp. 118–123), home to the biggest part of Vlach-speakers is more than accurate, and I am sure the same is true of her remarks on the other two countries. Nowicka reports that, as they themselves mentioned in interviews, Aromanians were, in many ways, similar to the Jews (p. 128). Istriots, on the other hand, speak a critically endangered language and are rather reserved towards openly stating their identity, which is now only a linguistic one (p. 139) due to their being perceived as the Other by Slavic, German or Italian-speaking majorities. The author repeatedly stresses the resistance of the groups under discussion to adopt a Romanian identity (pp. 117, 129–130, 140) and explains that the maintenance of Eastern Romance identities is too difficult under the present conditions of territorial dispersion and relatively low numbers, while it is directed towards models and archetypes connected with the past, which leads to a generation gap. She concludes *inter alia* that Eastern Romance populations have made choices of identity under the influence of both external and internal factors.

The fifth chapter is about *Identity Constructions among the Members of the Aromanian Community in the Korçë Area* (pp. 146-170), written by Daniela-Carmen Stoica, a lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages of "Fan S. Noli" University of Korçë (Albania), founder of the Romanian Language Lectorate at the same University of Korçë, and teacher of Romanian at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Tirana. Her contribution is the product of on-site research conducted from 2010 to 2015 and deals with various recorded oral histories from the sociolinguists' perspective. The author, a Romanian, views Aromanian (including its Frasherot variety spoken in Korçë) and all Eastern Romance varieties as Romanian dialects (p. 146). Stoica's method of research combines the sociolinguistic interview with the ethnographic qualitative research and discourse analysis, focusing mainly on indexicality, local occasioning, positioning and dialogism as relational processes, as the author explains (p. 154). In terms of transcription, she follows the Romanian school of linguistics and dialectology and, in particular the Romanian Linguistic Atlas. In pp. 1–9 Stoica explains why, in her opinion, Aromanian and Daco-Romanian cannot be linguistically separated, since both descend from Vulgar Latin; but, since Vulgar Latin is the basis of all Romance languages (p. 148), I find no reason to view all Eastern Romance varieties as dialects of Romanian despite their close relationship with

the latter; otherwise e.g. Provençal would be a dialect of Catalan rather than its closest relative. In this respect, Stoica's view echoes the Romanian State's position on minority identity governed by Romanian Law No. 299/2007 (cf. Vrzić 2021, pp. 197–200 in the same volume). Besides, she takes for granted that words such as *budză* 'lip', *baltă* 'swamp' or *bardzu* 'fair haired with spots', which have their counterparts in Romanian, are due to some Geto-Dacian substratum, which cannot be proven; after all, the fact that all of them have direct cognates in Albanian further complicates the picture. However, despite these two questionable points (which are marginal to the main topic, after all), Stoica's contribution is very interesting and well-documented in terms of description of Korçë Aromanian. Another important aspect of her contribution is the confirmation of older views about the crucial role of women as mothers and housewives with respet to the long-lasting retention and transmission of linguistic traits now lost in city dwellers' speech (p. 157). The author concstructively discusses issues of cultural borrowing, code-switching, Aromanian-speakers' endonyms, exonyms, social positioning of Aromanian and highlights the advantages of using oral history recordings for the description of regional dialects and varieties, given that in sociolinguistics the primary focus of analysis is the original speech, which calls for accurate and consistent methods of transcription, as well as that in dialectology the creation of digital archives of local varieties is very important. The two Annexes to the chapter (pp. 164–167) are very useful to the reader, as they clearly depict the phonological system of Farashot Aromanian and provide an example of oral dialectal text.

Mircea Măran, a historian who is a specialist of the study of culture, religion, migrations and identity of the Romanians in Vojvodina in the 19th and 20th centuries and currently Head of the Department for Philosophy and Social Sciences of the College for Preschool Education in Vršac (Serbia) has contributed the sixth chapter of the volume, titled *Megleno-Romanians in the Serbian Banat: Colonization and Assimilation* (pp. 171–185). He starts by reporting that Megleno-Romanians, the only native Romance-speakers to include Islamised groups as well (originating in Nânti or Nótia village, Greece, but transported to Turkey under the population exchange), do not use an endonym deriving from Latin *Romanus*, but call themselves Vlachs, as well as that Megleno-Romanian is regarded as a dialect of the Romanian language, as a dialect of Aromanian, as an intermediary between Romanian and Aromanian, or as a separate Romance language. Măran gives a rich historical record of Megleno-Romanians in Serbian Banat, especially in the village of Gudurica (pp. 173–179), by providing useful and new information about this Romance-speaking group that got finally assimilated to the majority. He has interviewed the last Megleno-Romanians of Gudurica to confirm that they have been entirely Serbianised and do not anymore transmit their 'weird' language to new generations (p. 183). The author concludes that the migration of Megleno-Romanians to Gudurica and to other villages in Serbian Banat as a result of colonisations from Yugoslav Macedonia after the Second World War further expanded the already rich ethnic and cultural mosaic that has characterised the Banat area throughout its existence. He observes that Megleno-Romanians, being already a minority population when they settled in Serbian Banat, finally became also a hidden minority, speaking a language that was not officially recognised and was even despised and derided by the Serbian majority, due to the negative stereotypes associated with the Vlach population. Such an adverse situation left no chance for Megleno-Romanians to survive as an ethnicity, which is why they have finally been assimilated. This is obvious in the fact that already the second generation adopted Serbian or Macedonian in order to identify in all aspects with Serbs or

Macedonians. As with all Eastern Romance groups, Megleno-Romanians did not adopted the Romanian identity, despite the strong presence of Romanians in Serbian Banat, a group rejoicing official recognition as a national minority in matters linguistic, cultural and educational. In Măran's opinion, association with Romanians could have saved their Romance identity, given that Romania promoted education and religion in standard Romanian within this community (pp. 183–184) in line with the aforementioned Romanian Law No. 299/2007. However, I think that this would be just another option for assimilation, even though by a closely related Romance-speaking people. Something similar (although in intra-state context) has happened e.g. with the Tsakonian language, which is called just a 'dialect' of Greek despite its very low mutual intelligibility with Standard Modern Greek and has ended up to be virtually exctinct; Tsakonian is, of course, Greek, but only in the sense of Hellenic as currenty in Greece the term 'Greek' is understood as Attic-based Modern Greek, while Tsakonian is Doric-based. In any event, I agree with the author (p. 184) that Megleno-Romanians living in Banat were neither strong enough nor numerous enough to support their existence; this led to their being forgottten for decades, even by historians, ethnologists and linguists, who managed to interview their last descendants in the very last moment.

Zvjezdana Vrzić, who teaches sociolinguistics at the University of Rijeka and New York University and was the first director of the Centre for Language Research at the University of Rijeka between 2015 and 2019 is the author of the seventh chapter of the volume, titled *Nation-State Ideology and Identity and Language Rights of Linguistic Minorities: Prospects for the Vlashki/Zheyanski-Speaking Communities* (pp. 186). As the author puts it, this contribution "examines the conflict between a minoritised group's multidimensional self-identification and a more simplistic identity ascription by outsiders, in this case, two interested nation-states." Like part of Nowicka's chapter, the one by Vrzić focuses on the Istro-Romanian communities of Croatia and their language, but this one sheds light to another aspect of the topic, namely the role Romania and Croatia in Istro-Romanians' current linguistic and ethnic minority status. She gives background information about the endangered Vlashki/Zheyanski (Istro-Romanian) language and its speakers, discusses internal and external identity perceptions and analyses legislation that is relevant to the topic. The author recalls (p. 200) D. Stjepanović's view, according to whom non-state groups not aligning with a kin-state but are subject to political claims and pressures by the latter can be labelled 'claimed co-ethnics', which can be seen as a further category besides 'stateless nations,' 'minorities without a kin-state,' and 'minorities with a kin state.' She carefully analyses Romanian Law No. 299/2007 and the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages (pp. ), both of them have impact on the fate of Istro-Romanians as well. In particular, to Romania they are just part of Romanian diaspora, regardless of their self-identification, while to Croatia they are just the Vlashki/Zheyanski-speaking *de facto* linguistic minority with no officially recognised status. Both stances do not contribute to the protection of Istro-Romanians and their endangered language. Identity statistics gathered by the Vrzić in her very useful table (p. 192) clearly illustrates the decline in Istro-Romanian identity among the population's choices in Šušnjevica area and Žejane according to the population censuses of 1945, 1981, 1991, 2001, and 2011. The author concludes that this national 'pigeonholing' – as she calls it (p. 203) – of Istro-Romanians by Romania and Croatia hampers any prospect for their language's preservation or even revitalisation and undermines their minority language rights. Despite this adverse context and the language shift to Croatian, the members of the Istro-Romanian language community

demonstrate some kind of 'language loyalty' and view their East Romance language as an important symbol of their culture. According to Vrzić, this positive stance of the community could serve as a means to help the language regain some strength and viability, especially if younger community members become involved.

"*What Language Do We Speak?" The Bayash in the Balkans and Mother Tongue Education* (pp. 207–232) is the title of the eighth chapter of the volume, a contribution by the Romance linguist and anthropologist Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković, a Senior Research Associate of the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Belgrade). The author discusses about the Bayash (also known as Boyash), probably one of the less visible East Romance-speaking community in the Balkans and Central Europe. She introduces them to the reader by highlighting (p. 207) their puzzling nature for researchers since 19th century (when the first attestations for their existence appear) considered to be Roma, but they do not speak Romani, they are marginalised by Romanians, they are said to link their history to the Dacians, and they are known under more than two dozen names; they were slaves in Wallachia and Moldova until the middle of the 19th century and they preserve archaic Romanian customs and rituals that have long been forgotten in Romania. Her contribution is very important, as it is the product of more than two decades long fieldwork. Sorescu-Marinković explores the various Bayash communities living in multiple states, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Slovakia, and Ukraine and discusses how the initiatives to introduce their mother tongue in the educational system presuppose an ideological clarification. As she explains (pp. 117–118, 210) by citing other scholars, this Roma caste, apart from the self-appellation Bayash (and its language variants Baiesi, Bajaši/Bejaši, Beás, Banjaši; let me add also Băieși and Bojaši) uses various self-appellations such as Karavlasi, Rudari/Ludari, Lingurari, Ursari, Kopanari, Fusari, Kašikči etc, depending on country and internal regional divisions, while community leaders estimate their number at between 220,000 and 500,000. The author informs us (p. 208–209) that almost a century ago, ethnographer Ion Chelcea was the first to study this ethnic group in Romania and called them "an ethnographic enigma", an old people, situated at an equal distance from Roma as they are from Romanians. As to their self-perception, some have opted for a Romanian identity, others for a Roma one, while several groups developed a separate, Bayash identity, often linking their history to important moments or figures in the history of the country they live in, the author reports (p. 210) by citing works of other scholars. By citing her previous work she explains that Bayash follow either the Catholic or the Orthodox Christian denomination and have various differences as to the extent of preservation of their original customs (p. 210–211, footnote 12). Sorescu-Marinković studies language ideology in combination with language standardisation practices and tries to shed light on the self-perceptions of Bayash communities in matters cultural and historical. She also explores eventual opportunities for those communities to be educated in their native language. As she points out (p. 227), "Apart from maintaining linguistic biodiversity, the introduction of their mother tongue in more schools would make Bayash pupils proud and aware of their cultural and linguistic heritage, and at the same time remove the stigma of a non-standardised language, unfit for writing, teaching or official communication."

The ninth (and last) chapter has been written by the linguist Monica Huțanu, an Assistant Professor at the Romanian Studies Department at the West University of Timișoara (Romania) and lecturer of the Romanian language at the University of Belgrade (Serbia) is the author of the ninth

and last chapter of the volume, which is titled *Performing Vlach-ness Online: The Enregisterment of Vlach Romanian on Facebook*. As the author explains (pp. 236–237), she focuses on an East Romance-speaking ethnic group living in a region south of the Danube, in the eastern part of Serbia, along the rivers Timok, Mlava, Morava and Pek, called Vlasi in Serbian, *rumîni* – as well as *vla(h)* – In their own vernacular, *români timoceni* or *români din Serbia* or *vlahi* in the Romanian public and academic discourse, and *Vlachs* or *Dacoromanian Vlachs* in English-language academic discourse. In particular, she studies the Vlach identity as it appears in a Facebook page called "Vlasi na kvadrat". After briefly tracing their origins in Wallachia and Banat (Romania), Huțanu enters in more sociolinguistic and demographic details about the group. In p. 239 she illustrates on a table the main ideological factions in the Vlach community of Eastern Serbia, which she distinguishes into reintegrationists or pro-Romanian and independentists or pro-Vlach. By citing rich sources, the author mentions that, especially the latter group has taken several language planning measures in the last 20 years, aiming at the codification and revitalisation of the vernacular (corpus planning), the introduction of Vlach Romanian in education (acquisition planning) and toward the standardisation of Vlach Romanian as a distinct, Ausbau language (status planning); she further writes on the writing systems used so far in Vlach Romanian and lists the text types available (fairy tales, nusery rhymes, children's books, textbooks, grammars etc.) – both translated and original (pp. 239–240). As we learn from Huțanu's chapter, in September 2015 the Vlach National Council passed a resolution on the standardisation of the Vlach language, which was then published in the Official Gazette of Serbia a month later but, despite its promulgated standardisation, Vlach still has no official status in Serbia. Huțanu provides numerous examples of discourse and even memes in Vlach Romanian (pp. 243–246) on this page, adding that the speakers' pragmatic interactions are of crucial importance to the development and preservation of their identity through the use of their language. The author utilises the concept of enregisterment, which comprises processes and practices through which a linguistic repertoire of forms becomes socially recognisable to a population of language users and comes to index speaker attributes; such markers of Vlach-ness online are e.g. the suffix *-ešće* or the lack of distinction between the Serbian phonemes /ʧ/ and /ʨ/. Huțanu concludes (p. 250) that the administrator and the users of the Facebook page under discussion construct and perform an identity that is at the same time local (Vlach), Serbian and gastarbajter, through metapragmatic practices such as talking explicitly about forms and making the indexical link obvious or using stylised performances of features typifying the local variety.

As a general evaluation, I would say that the volume is of high academic and scholarly quality, as it brings together specialists from the social sciences and the humanities with manifold backgrounds and approaches, a choice that aspires to provide readers with global, objective and valuable information about the multifaceted relationship between the Romance languages spoken in the Balkans and the intra- and inter-group perception of their identity. There is no doubt that not only specialists, but also any reader interested in such topics will be benefited by the new information and the new insights included in the book.

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