

shorts and two features made for Sarajevo television in the late seventies and influenced particularly by Czech cinema. The next period, the "Sarajevo films," includes *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?* and *When Father Went Away on Business*, both of which are "psychological dramas" "drawing on experiences of Bosnian Moslems in Tito's Yugoslavia" (44). With the emergence of *Time of the Gypsies*, Kusturica's style matures; Jordanova places all the films made after 1989 in this period. Though Jordanova eschews a rigorous close analysis of the films, her many brief plot summaries, discussions of each film's production and reception and identification of various influences on Kusturica are very useful. The section concerning techniques extends some lines of inquiry set up previously, addressing the question of intertextuality in the films and Kusturica's use of works by Fellini, Tarkovsky, Capra, Renoir and Forman. By far the strongest aspect of this study is its effective situation of Kusturica in the global context of a "world cinema," rather than a representative national canon. Jordanova's comparative approach offers the possibility of a wider range of interpretative studies than conventional national contextualization often allows.

In discussing techniques and influences, Jordanova dwells on Kusturica's cinema aesthetics: the baroque imagery, the layering and entwining of narratives, the recurrence of paradigmatic themes and tropes and the love of the fantastic as manifest in dream sequences and characters blessed with telekinesis. For Jordanova, Kusturica is a postmodern artist because he continuously "subverts traditional aesthetic categories" (97) — an assertion supported more by a catalogue of techniques than a rigorous engagement with postmodern aesthetics. One question left unanswered here is why Jordanova treats the films' aesthetics and their politics separately, almost as if they were unrelated issues. "[A]dmiration for his abundant and exuberant artistry and esteem for the overwhelming richness of his visual style," she argues, "have somewhat obscured the understanding of his ideology" (151). The problem with such a framework is that it reduces Kusturica on the one hand to a mere purveyor of discontinuous styles, and on the other to an immature ideologue with an idiosyncratic view of social transformation as embodied in the coming of age of the male ego (151). Against this division and reduction, it might be argued that close readings of Kusturica's works yield political questions independent of both his public pronouncements (his biography and persona) and of the conventional understanding of postmodern aesthetic techniques, a possibility which Jordanova, despite her many suggestive observations, appears to discount here.

*Albanskij gegkij govor sela Muhurr (kraina Dibër):
Sintaksis, Leksika, Ètnolingvistika, Teksty*
'The Albanian Geg Dialect of the
Village of Muhurr (Dibër region):
Syntax, Lexicon, Ethnolinguistics, Texts'
(Materialen zum Südosteuropasprachatlas, vol. 3)

Dželjal' Jully [Xhelal Ylli] and Andrej N. Sobolev

2003. Marburg an der Lahn: Biblion Verlag, 540 pp.
CD, ISBN 3-932331-36-X

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Before the Balkan Wars, there were two Ottoman administrative centers with the name Dibre or Debre (Albanian Dibër, Macedonian Debar): Dibre-i-Bâlâ (Upper Dibre) and, to the northwest of it, Dibre-i-Zîr (Lower Dibre). The former is now Debar in the Republic of Macedonia, the latter is Peshkopi in the Republic of Albania. The international border between the two follows the old Ottoman administrative boundary along the ridges of Mounts Korab and Deshat east of Peshkopi and the River Black Drin (Albanian Drin i Zi, Macedonian Crni Drim) west of Debar, and Dibër/Debar is still the name of the administrative district on each side of the border. As the authors note in their introduction (p. 15), the Muhurr of their study is also known as Fush Muhurr (Muhurr Field), Hurdh-Muhurr (Muhurr Marsh) being a smaller village in the vicinity. A few kilometers west of Peshkopi, which serves as its market town, Muhurr is on the west bank of the Drin; it is a commune center and has an agricultural high school. The inhabitants are Muslim. The authors' description of the region as "northeast Albanian" is technically accurate, if Albania is simply quartered. From an Albanian dialectological point of view, however (as the authors later note, p. 17), Muhurr is in the Central Geg region (as opposed to Southern, Northwestern and Northeastern), and we can add that within Central Geg it is on the eastern border of West Central Geg, whose boundary runs approximately along the Black Drin. Moreover, the entire region has a significant history of multilingualism involving Albanian, Macedonian and Turkish.

This description is the third in a series by an international group of Balkanists who are addressing the task of creating a Balkan linguistic atlas on the basis of a pilot project begun at the University of St. Petersburg in 1996. This project pursues the more modest goal of working to produce an atlas that will cover selected, representative dialects in depth, rather than attempting the

Herculean task of surveying all the dialects of all the languages of the region. The finished project will cover thirteen points (seven Slavic, three Greek, two Albanian and one Romance), of which the first was the Bulgarian dialect of Široka Lăka (and nearby villages) in the Rhodopes (Smolyan region) and the second was the Albanian Tosk dialect of Leshnja (Skrapar region; for my review of that volume see *Balkanistica* 16, pp. 238-40).

Since the focus of the project is precisely areal, it examines the dialects in terms of those categories that are of greatest relevance to language contact: syntax and lexicon, as well as ethnolinguistics. The volume under review here comprises an introduction (17-46), syntax (47-288), lexicon (288-418), ethnolinguistics (419-445) and texts (446-538). The bibliography (539) consists of nineteen items and there is a 58-minute CD of twenty-three tracks: seven each from two speakers, eight from a third and one from a fourth of the total of eight persons (five men and three women, aged 55-80) who served as consultants. Unlike the previous volume, all the texts are in one section rather than being divided between the ethnolinguistics chapter and a chapter of texts.

The introduction gives some details about Muhurr, the informants and remarks on phonology and morphology. Reference is made to Bahri Beci's descriptions of three other villages in the Dibër region as well as his overview of Central Geg. The section on phonetics (17-31) goes into much more detail than the corresponding section in the Leshnja volume. Nonetheless, some phenomena will certainly be worth further investigation. Thus, for example, the authors state that the phonemic system of stressed vowels consists of five long, five short and four nasal (*a, e, i, u, o* can all be long or short; nasal *â* and *ô* are in free distribution). The unstressed system consists of the five vowels plus schwa (indicated by *ě*). They exclude occurrences of stressed schwa as influences of the standard language (p. 23). Nonetheless, there are minimal pairs with native stressed schwa. Stressed *i* often gives *ěj*, and this includes *i* from etymological high front rounded *y*. Before *j*, however, it appears that *i* does not diphthongize, thus we can have a minimal contrast between, e.g., *at'ěj* (< *aty*) 'nearby' and *at'ij* 'of him, it.' Since stressed *y* and stressed *i* usually fall together, e.g., *di* (< *di*) 'know' (p. 507) and *di* (< *dy*) 'two' (p. 21), there seems to be no justification for positing an underlying (and never occurring) *y*. On the other hand, since there is so much variation in the results of stressed *i* (*ěi, ěj, ai, aj, ei, ej, e* and *i*), there seems to be room for additional analysis. The functional load of length seems to be extremely low. While the authors adduce fourteen examples (p. 18), I only came across three in the Texts chapter, *Ver:rs* 'in springtime' in free variation with *Verēs* and *Vers* (e.g., 460), *Pi:rr* [a family name] (446) and *ngju:* 'heard' (483). While I may have missed a few, all in all the lack of length is striking. As the authors themselves note (p. 19), there are numerous examples where an expected nasal is plain. The transcription is broadly phonetic, using a system based on Albanian orthography.

As with the Leshnja volume, the excellent CD provides rich material, although what I heard on the CD did not always correspond exactly to what was transcribed, e.g., the words *sh'enje*,

vërr'ej, mo, Preç' all sounded like they had stressed nasals to me; *kafë* on p. 529 should have had a stress mark, and it sounded like *k'ovën*, which occurs in the next line. These are minor quibbles, however; the authors have done a marvelous job of giving us material that is useful both in the book's analyses and beyond them. The section on morphology (31-45) is again more detailed and organized in a more readable fashion than in the Leshnja volume, but it is restricted to dialectologically interesting forms. Since the section on syntax is organized morphologically and morpho-syntactically, much can be looked up in that section. In general, the presentation makes this volume relatively easy to compare with more traditional works dealing with other villages in the region.

After a two-page introductory section, the fifteen sections that make up the syntax chapter are the following: Substantive (55 pp.), Pronoun (16 pp.), Adjective (17 pp.), Numeral (7 pp.), Adverb (3 pp.), Verb (81 pp.), Substantival Phrase (4 pp.), Adjectival Phrase (1 page), Quantitative Phrase (5 pp.), Prepositions (16 pp.), Coordinating Conjunctions (4 pp.), Structure of the Simple Sentence (11 pp.), Existential and Possessive Phrases (6 pp.), Communicative Direction of the Expression (interrogatives, negatives and particles; 6 pp.) and Subordinate Clause (11 pp.). Each section is organized according to the questions of a standardized questionnaire, and thus they are readily comparable with the dialects described in the previous two volumes. This genuine comparability, thoroughness of (morpho-)syntactic coverage, as well as the enormous wealth of examples and details are extremely strong points of this work.

The chapter on the lexicon is organized according to twelve lexical categories covering nature, humanity and labor: landscape, weather, body parts, physical characteristics, kinship terms, formulaic expressions, animal husbandry, agricultural, horticultural, apicultural, avicultural and dairy terms. This is followed by an account of the semantics of seventy-three selected lexical Balkanisms of various origins (Greek, Latin, Turkish, Slavic and "substrate"). For the most part, this section follows the format of the Leshnja volume, which makes for ease of comparison. For some reason, though, the forty-six expressions under "family etiquette" (i.e., formulaic expressions) are numbered 5.201-246 in the Leshnja volume, but 5.1.01-46 in this volume. The change of numbering, however, was not effected in the cross-referencing. Thus, for example, the greeting for the New Year uttered by an arriving guest is 5.223 in the Leshnja volume and 5.1.23 in the Muhurr volume, but the reply (5.224 and 5.1.24, respectively) is labeled "answer of the host to 5.223" in both volumes. This is no great impediment, but it is a minor inconvenience.

The chapter on ethnolinguistics comprises five sections: the folk calendar, household and other rituals, rites of passage (birth, marriage, death), mythological beliefs (vampires, the evil eye, etc.) and miscellaneous. Unlike the Leshnja volume, the questions in this chapter do not have textual answers, which latter are instead integrated into the Texts chapter. The order of presentation, however, is the same, i.e., by topic rather than by informant, as was the case in the first (Široka

Läka) volume. On the one hand, it is convenient having the texts in the sections they are describing; on the other a simple cross-dialectal comparison of practices and vocabulary is rendered easier when the texts are in a separate section. The "miscellaneous" section has only a couple of random folk beliefs concerning phobias and how girls try to make their hair grow longer.

As with the Leshnja volume, the rich selection of texts illustrates the dialect itself as well as the history and culture of those who speak it, and they also make entertaining reading. Keeping in mind the purpose of the volume, which is to provide material for a comparative Balkan atlas, this volume, too, succeeds admirably in its goals. It also provides an enormously rich trove of data for any Albanologist or Balkanist. It is another truly valuable contribution to both Albanian and Balkan linguistics, and we look forward to future volumes in the series.

*The Treasure of Jewish Art:
The 1673 Illuminated Scroll of Esther Offered to a Romanian Hierarch*

Cornelia Bodea

2002. Iași, Romania: Center for Romanian Studies, 72 pp. + annex

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In the mid-1990s, Cornelia Bodea, one of Romania's most distinguished historians, became aware of an unusual piece of art in the collections of the Romanian Academy Library in București. This was an illuminated scroll (or *megillah*) of the Biblical Book of Esther, dated 1673. Scrolls of Esther are interesting artistically because they are the only Biblical texts which can be illustrated owing to the fact that there is no mention of God's name in the narrative. However, this one is different. In addition to the artwork, the scroll has two distinctive features: the placement of the coat of arms of the medieval Romanian Principality of Moldova in the ornamental section at the beginning of the scroll and the inclusion of the date in Cyrillic characters. Bodea spent the next several years doing historical detective work on the *Megillath Esther Iași 1673* attempting to determine who had commissioned the scroll and who it was dedicated to. This involved considerable researches in France, Israel and the United States, as well as Romania.

The book is divided into four parts: the first is a brief discussion of the contents of the Book of Esther; the second investigates the history and techniques of these kind of engraved and illuminated *megilloth*; the third presents an overview of the cultural-religious history of 17th century Moldova, the Golden Century of medieval Romanian civilization, which was led by Dosoftei (1624-1693), and included Miron Costin (1633-1693) and Nicolae Milescu (1636-1708); and the fourth is a full color reproduction of the *Megillath Esther Iași 1673*.

The rules for these *megilloth* are highly codified. A *megillah* is composed of a highly stylized handwritten text, an engraved framework and illuminations. Bodea describes these rules and a number of existing *megilloth* and compares them to the Iași scroll. Interestingly, the largest number of surviving *megilloth* are from Italy, particularly Venice. It is her conclusion, from the comparative evidence, that most of the Iași *megillah* was in fact done in Venice.

The main questions left to be resolved were "Who might have commissioned this *megillah*? And for whom?" (p. 42) Bodea's conclusion is that the Iași *megillath* was commissioned by the scholar Nathan Nata Hanover, who was chief rabbi in the capital of Moldova from 1657 to 1673. Hanover, it turns out, spent several years in Venice, where he published an account of the