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## DIGITIZED BULLETIN *LUNJINA* SERBIAN AROMANIAN SOCIETY

**Abstract.** The *Lunjina* Serbian Aromanian Society was founded in Belgrade in 1991, and in the period from 1999 to 2010 it published a bulletin called *Lunjina*, whose initiator and editor-in-chief was Professor Dr. Pribislav Marinković. The Society's ongoing goal is to preserve the Aromanian identity by nurturing its history, language, culture, and tradition. As the Aromanian people have resided in the Balkan Peninsula for centuries, preserving their unique identity and protecting their artistic and intangible heritage from assimilation is essential. The magazine published titles and photographs depicting Aromanian life in the 19th and 20th centuries. It highlighted their role in developing Serbian culture, their unique approach to education, and their contributions to society and science. The digitization of archival materials on Aromanians in Belgrade and Serbia allows the public, especially younger generations, to learn about their presence in our region. This project brings to light crucial historical facts, safeguarding them from oblivion. The digitization project encompasses the magazine itself, the preparation of key terms for easier reading, and uploading to the Rastko platform and other digital media.

**Keywords.** Aromanians, education, *Lunjina*, tradition, digitization.

### 1. Aromanians in Serbia and their education

Most of the Greeks who lived in this area during the 18th and 19th centuries were Aromanians. Many ethnologists and historians believe that the Aromanians were herders who spread across the Balkan Peninsula, going to warmer regions in the winter and to the high mountains in the summer.<sup>1</sup> Originally centered in the Pinda Mountain massif, the Aromanians remained in the mountainous regions of Epirus, Illyria, Macedonia, and Thrace, even after the arrival of Slavic settlers. One part of the population, abandoning the pastoral way of life and forming the first permanent settlements, settled in Greek territory. Their unique language was based on Latin, incorporating elements from Greek, Slavic, and Albanian languages. Those who settled in Greece adopted the Greek language, while the Aromanian language persisted primarily in Bitola, Kruševo, and a few smaller villages, where most Aromanians still reside.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the Aromanian towns were formed during the 18th century. Men were mostly engaged in trade - *they carried bags*, while women, with children, stayed at home in larger households.<sup>3</sup> Moskopolje, in today's Albania, was the largest trade and educational center where the youth of Aromanian acquired knowledge in Greek and

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<sup>1</sup>L. j. Gavrilović, *Cincari - diaspora as historical destiny*, Belgrade 1989, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>*The Greek from the books is too difficult, not even that we do not understand about, although we speak Greek well. We are Aromanians. We don't want to forget the language we learned from our mothers. We love our language as well as our villages, our mountains. We are descended from the Romans, we have a history as old as the Greeks, we can be just as proud of our ancestors as they were. Why would you give up your language then?* Mr. Wejgand, *Aromuni*, Belgrade 1995, p. 259.

<sup>3</sup>According to the way of trade, merchants were divided into two groups: wholesale merchants - all ' grosso and retail merchants or bagmen - alla minuta. D. Popivć, *O Cincarima*, Belgrade 1937, p. 88.

Aromanian languages.<sup>4</sup> In the second half of the 18th century, in 1769, the Turks, taking everything from the rich houses, destroyed Moskopolje. Forced to leave their habitats, the Aromanians migrated and, through trade, assimilated among the population of the surrounding countries. In their desire to go as far as possible from the center of Turkish power, they settled Serbia and Bosnia, and a little later Austria-Hungary. That's how they came to Serbia, to Belgrade, where during the 19th century they sold the finest goods from the East - fabrics, spices, and perfumes.

Life in *Aromanian* houses took place mainly in one large room where they gathered around the name day.<sup>5</sup> They had little furniture, slept on carpets, and ate a lot of milky products and a variety of vegetables. At the age of ten or twelve, the boys went with their fathers to work. Their hard life is also told by oral tradition, which is full of longing and sadness for their husband, son, or brother. The women, who stayed at home, passed on the language and traditions, loyalty to the family, and frugality. In Aromanian society, as in many cultures, women were the principal keepers of family life and national customs.

Many Greeks or Armenians lived in Belgrade at the beginning of the 18th century. For the needs of their children's education, Greek merchants founded a *small Greek school* even before 1718. But, with the arrival of the Austrians in Belgrade, many of them left their homes, so there was a possibility that it would be extinguished.<sup>6</sup> The Greek school continued its operations on the initiative of Mojsije Petrović, Metropolitan of Belgrade, who aimed to counter Catholic influence. At that time, the school also catered to Serbian children. Located in the courtyard of the Serbian elementary school, the building housed a Greek teacher who instructed students in speaking, reading, writing, and singing in Greek. During the school year 1721/22, it was taught by teacher Gerasim, in the period from 1723 to 1726 by teacher Konstantin, and 1728 by a Greek from Thessaloniki, Nikola Loginatat.<sup>7</sup> The teachers of that time had the right *to beg for contributions for themselves instead of a salary at the cup in the church*.<sup>8</sup> It is assumed that, sporadically, Greek teachers brought up and educated both Greek and Serbian students. However, some data lead to the conclusion that Greek schools in Zemun and Novi Sad, with minor interruptions, also worked during the 18th century and that Serbian children were also educated there.

The Greek school in Zemun was renewed in 1793. Because it was founded by merchants, it is understandable that the teaching, which took place in Modern Greece, had a practical character. At the beginning of the 19th century, the school was attended by 88 students, and since it was better than the one in Belgrade, it was also attended by Serbian children from noble families, among whom were Ilija Garašanin and Sima Milutinović Sarajlija.<sup>9</sup>

In Novi Sad, as early as 1730, there was a Greek school, which had its building at the end of 1782. In addition to Greeks from Novi Sad, at the beginning of the 19th century, the school was also attended by Serbian children who, after elementary school, came for further education. Great attention was paid to religious teaching, and the books from which they learned were in Greek, or bilingual in Greek and Serbian. In 1870, as it ran out of students, the school was closed.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The Greek school in Moskopolje was rebuilt in 1840. Prince Miloš was among the contributors. *The same*, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup>Unlike the Serbs, the Cincars did not celebrate holidays but name days.

<sup>6</sup>*Schooling and education among the Serbs in the 18th century*, Belgrade 1967, p. 36.

<sup>7</sup>*The same*, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup>D. Popović, *Mentioned*, p. 229.

<sup>9</sup>M. Đ. Milićević, *Monument of famous people in the Serbian nation*, Belgrade 1888, p. 94.

<sup>10</sup>D. Popović, *Mentioned*, p. 222.

In Serbia, after the Second Uprising, the network of schools expanded, and in Belgrade, among others, foreign schools appeared again. From 1818, there was a Jewish school, from 1826, a Turkish school, and in 1829, the German ecclesiastical municipality had its own school. In those years, the work of the Greek school was also renewed. One of the first pieces of information comes from 1825 when Prince Miloš was informed that *the priest Naum Ičko and others from the community were begging him to allow a Greek teacher to teach the children.*<sup>11</sup> The school, with about twenty students who also studied the ancient Greek language, was located on the upper floor in the house of Steva Srbin, and Jani Mišu and Đorđe Zahariades are mentioned as teachers.<sup>12</sup> This school, like others, was attended by some Serbian children from richer families to learn something more. The school was supported by city administrations, the Greek municipality, and the Greek or Aromanian merchants.

In addition to this municipal school, in the middle of the 19th century, when the number of students increased, there were also private Greek schools. At the end of 1847, among the archive material, there is also mention of the work of one private school.<sup>13</sup> Petar Radovanović, head administrator of all elementary schools in Belgrade, on 3/15 December 1847, informed the Ministry of Education that a group of citizens intended to open a private Greek school, which began to work on January 2 of the next year.<sup>14</sup>

The school worked according to the method of pedagogue Lankester, which was based on mutual student assistance. This kind of work made it possible for a larger number of students to be educated in the presence of only one teacher. The tutor Nikola Kotula, a merchant, took care of the school, and the main contributors were the brothers M. and N. Boti and Pavle Mihajlović.<sup>15</sup>

There were many difficulties in the work of private Greek schools. The school was closed, due to non-regularity in work, in March 1859, but after a lot of persuasion, the Ministry of Education approved, it on April 27/10. May 1859, the re-opening of this school. Teacher Geras wrote to the Ministry of Education that twenty students, who will be divided into two classes, will learn Jelin language with grammar and syntax, church history, calculus - practical and theoretical, mathematical-physical geography, Jelin history, and calligraphy.<sup>16</sup>

Not one child, who started attending public school, could pass in this private until he had finished the fourth grade. It was also indicated that all subjects must be taught, as in other primary schools, and that, for additional subjects, it is necessary to request approval. The teacher was obliged, at the beginning of each school year, to submit a list of children, and at the end of July, a work report with the achieved student success. The Ministry of Education had to be informed about every change, including the change of the school's address itself.<sup>17</sup>

This is how the private Greek school in Belgrade started working again. In addition to daily classes, students were required to take annual exams at the end of the school year in Christian science, history, calculus, and Jelin language. The teaching had a practical character, so the math tasks were related to everyday life, that is, to trade.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>S. Ćunković, *Schooling and education in Serbia in the 19th century*, Belgrade 1971, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup>D. Popivć, *Mentioned*, p. 229.

<sup>13</sup>AS (Archives of Serbia), MP, F- VII , 611/47

<sup>14</sup>Petar Radovanović (1808-1857). He was the director of primary schools, the president of the municipal court and a professor of mathematics, statistics and the German language at the Lyceum.

<sup>15</sup>AS, MP, F- VII , 611/47

<sup>16</sup>D. Popivć, *Mentioned*, p. 229.

<sup>17</sup>*The same*, p. 239.

<sup>18</sup>S. Sremac, *Girk-Gerasa*, Belgrade 1948, p. 41.

Private schools were under state supervision, and compulsory subjects included the Serbian language, and in the higher grades, Serbian history and the history of Serbian literature. A representative of the Ministry of Education attended the annual exams, and in case of irregularities in the work, the Ministry could close the school. Teachers in private Greek schools were supported both by individuals and by the Greek municipality itself. The teacher received part of his salary in kind and part in money.<sup>19</sup> During the 18th and 19th centuries, private or municipal Greek schools operated in addition to Belgrade and other larger towns in Serbia.<sup>20</sup> This is how the Greek school in Šabac worked at the end of the 18th century. *The Greek school in Šabac was in the apartments of boarders and wealthier citizens. After 1809, Greek children went together with Serbian children, but already after 1816, a Greek school appeared again, and in it the teacher Đorđe Zahariades, who had come from Macedonia.*<sup>21</sup>



Figure 1. Elementary school in Kruševo, 1928.

Pupils studied Greek in Smederevo with teachers Sava Ljotin and Konstantin Popović, and in the school year 1866/7, there was also a private Greek school with Nikola Daskal. As early as 1870, the Greek language was taught in the elementary school in Smederevo, and Greek language classes were taught by Jova Bimbić.<sup>22</sup> According to the memories of Ljubo Pavlović, the director of the gymnasium in Šabac, in Valjevo, in 1875, a private Greek school operated in the courtyard of the Serbian elementary school.<sup>23</sup>

Due to the reduced number of students as well as the Serbization of the Greeks, i.e., Aromanians, all Greek schools in Serbia, in the 80s of the XIX century, stopped working. With their closure, the school system in Serbia lost one of its specificities, namely the education of foreign or local students in foreign schools, specifically in municipal or private Greek schools.

<sup>19</sup>The same, p. 40.

<sup>20</sup>In addition to these, in Serbia, in 1864, the first Greek school was founded in Bitola. During 1889 in Bitola where a high school with boarding, as well as a male and female elementary school; in Kruševo, a high school and a female elementary school, and in Ohrid and Prilep, male and female elementary schools. G. Wejgand, *Mentioned*, Belgrade 1995, p. 255.

<sup>21</sup>D. Popović, *Mentioned*, p. 240.

<sup>22</sup>The same, p. 241.

<sup>23</sup>The same, p. 241.





Figure 2. Course for adult girls, Kruševo, about 1930.

## 2. *Lunjina* Serbian Aromanians Society and *Lunjina* bulletin

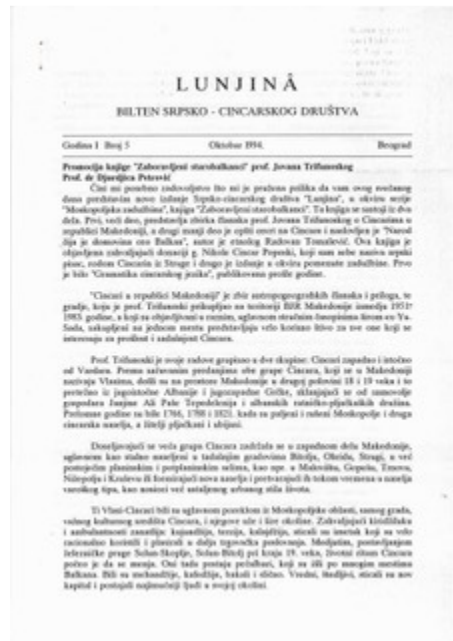
Formed in 1991, the Serbian Aromanians Association *Lunjina* aims to preserve the influence of Aromanians on the culture and economic development of the Balkan Peninsula. The goal of the Society is to acquaint the public with the existence of Aromanian in these areas, to point out the contribution of the Aromanian people to the overall development of Serbian society, and to preserve traditions, customs, and language. In addition to other publications, the society printed the *Serbian Aromanian Dictionary* and the *Aromanian Serbian Dictionary*, authored by Pribislav Marinković.



When *Lunjina* was founded, it gathered Aromanians from all over Serbia, from Belgrade, Pančevo, and Smederevo, those who came from Macedonia (Vlasi) or those who came from Bosnia (Kalajdžije). During its existence, the Association organized many lectures, exhibitions, musical evenings, language workshops, and performances in the country and abroad. The society celebrates the feast of St. Athanasius on January 31 at the Church of the Ascension, marked by an icon and the ceremonial cutting of a celebration cake. The Association also includes a singing group dedicated to preserving Aromanian songs, performing both domestically and internationally at major events celebrating Aromanian language and culture. Likewise, during May, the Days of Aromanian Culture are organized in Belgrade, and on Cveti (Christ's entry into Jerusalem) they are part of the manifestation of *Jevrem's Street of Meeting*. At many gatherings, a dish made according to Aromanian's recipes is served. It should be emphasized that on the website of the *Lunjina* Society, there is an instruction manual for using the Aromanian keyboard.

From 1999 to 2010, the *Lunjina* Serbian Aromanian Society published a newsletter called *Lunjina*, initiated and edited by Professor Dr. Pribislav Marinković. The team editorial board consisted of Professor Ksenija Furjanović, Professor Vesna Dimitrijević, and Ph.D. Bratislav Marinković. The Bulletin aimed to strengthen the

activity of the members of the Society, to acquaint the public with events in the past, as well as to be active in the work of the Society itself. The magazine published titles and photos related to the life of Aromanian during the 19th and 20th centuries, their importance for the development of Serbian culture, their uniqueness in the acquisition of education, and their contribution to the overall development of society and science. The bulletin, published once or twice a month, comprised ten to twenty A4 pages. It featured photocopies in Latin or Cyrillic script, sections in Aromanian, photographs, press clippings, classifieds, and greeting cards.

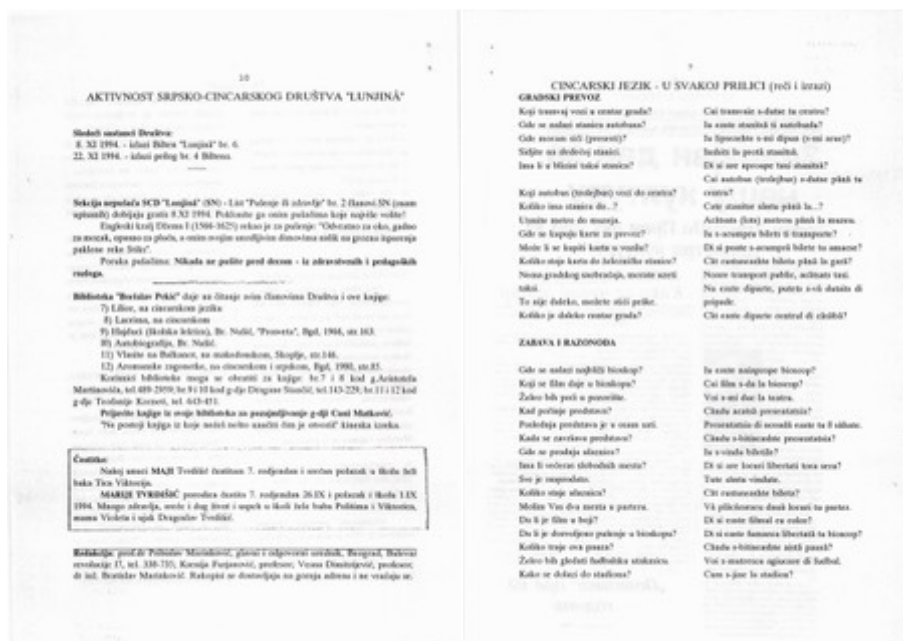


On this occasion, we will single out several topics that this magazine dealt with: *Who's Who or Famous Tinkers in Serbia* - biographies are given, among others, directed by Aleksandar Saša Petrović, Prota Bratislava S. Marinković, Minister of Finance Lazar Paču, neurologist Jovan Vučo, Doctor Tom Leko, Master of Pharmacy Dobrota Šterić. Then comes the part that refers to cynic Doctor of Science - among others, there are Dejan Medaković, Đurđica Petrović, and Dragoljub Srejšević; *Aromanians* writers - Branislav Nucci, Jovan Sterija Popović, Borivoje Pekić and Aromanian academicians - Vladimir Veličković, Dejan Despić, Jovanka Kalić Mijušković, Stevan Karamata, Dejan Medaković, Nikola Tasić and Svetlana Velmar Janković.

The section *Aromanian language at every opportunity* includes the Serbian Aromanian dictionary with phrases like *NJ Aestes yale, ma tuteodilesantuactsate* (I'm sorry, all the rooms are taken) and *Cu see pi amare* (With a view of the sea), along with short stories in both Aromanian and Serbian languages, such as *Knowledge saves from death* etc.<sup>24</sup>

The bulletin featured news on various activities, including the celebration of Saint Athanasius, with the *Our Father* printed in both Serbian and Aromanian. It also included texts and photos from children's New Year festivities. Additionally, the bulletin listed lecture topics and emphasized the collection of data about Aromanians and their families.

<sup>24</sup>Lunjina, Belgrade 2003, p. 3.



Like other publications, the Lunjina newsletter featured small ads, including personal congratulations to Society members, such as Grandma Tica Viktorija wishing her granddaughter Maja Tvrđišić a happy 7th birthday and a successful start to school.<sup>25</sup>

The special feature of the newsletter is the *Borislav Pekić Library*, i.e., the mutual loan of books. An issue stated that the Borislav Pekić Library offers Society members access to books featured in earlier magazine issues. *Report books from your library for borrowing to Ms. Cana Matković.*<sup>26</sup>

Digitizing the content rich Lunjina magazine was essential to make it accessible to a wider audience. Digitization of the collected, now archival, materials related to the life of Aromanians in Belgrade and Serbia provides the opportunity for the public, especially the younger generations, to become familiar with the existence of Aromanians in our region, that is, to retrieve important facts from oblivion and disappearance for historical the sequence of the existence of the Serbian state. The digitization project includes the digitization of the magazine itself, preparation for reading according to keywords, editing of the text considering that there are some parts in the Aromanian language, uploading to the *Rastko platform*, the website of the Serbian Aromanian Society *Lunjina*, the website of the Belgrade City Library and other digital media.

The digitalization of the Bulletin was funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia. The organizing committee included Dr. Ing. Bratislav Marinković, who digitized the materials, along with Spomenka Bojanić, Milena Šećerović, Ljiljana Buza, Maja Nikolova, and the *Srbosoft* organization.

### 3. Conclusion

Aromanian knowledge of international trade, the literacy of their families, and their knowledge and wealth marked the cultural and economic life of Serbia in the middle of the 19th century. They formed the town's elite, including wealthy merchants, lawyers, doctors, professors, politicians, and notably, benefactors.

<sup>25</sup> *Lunjina*, Belgrade 2004, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Lunjina*, Belgrade 2001, p. 5.

Owing to their education, Greek was the primary language of communication among Aromanians, though within their families, they spoke their native tongue. They easily fit into the environment and accepted the language of the majority but considered the use of their language to be the basis of tradition. They believed literacy's spread necessitated language standardization. Thus, before Vuk Stefanović's *Pismenica*, the *Arumun grammar or Macednoskovlaška* by Mihailo Bojadži was published in Vienna in 1813.

The Serbian *Aromanian* society *Lunjina* has been present on the cultural scene of Belgrade and Serbia for many years. In addition to organizing lectures and musical events, the Society published the magazine *Lunjina* for twenty years, showcasing the Aromanians' past life, habits, language, and the Society's work. Digitizing the magazine and creating a digital database has enabled the widespread dissemination of information about the Aromanians, a group significantly contributing to the formation of civil society and Serbia's overall development.

In Serbia, the Aromanians are not recognized as a national minority, while in Macedonia, the state television broadcasts part of its programs in the Aromanian language, and in some elementary schools, optional teaching of the Aromanian language has been introduced. We anticipate that in Serbia, Aromanians will receive the recognition they deserve.

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