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WHO ARE ‘OAMENII NOSTRI’ (OUR PEOPLE): RUDARI, LINGURARI, BĂIESHI, ETC., AND THEIR IDENTITIES

Introduction

In many countries of Southeast and Central Europe, Latin America, The United States and Canada and, in the last few decades also in many Western European countries, there are Romanian-language communities known under different names – mostly *Rudari* (or *Ludari*), *Lingurari*, and *Băieshi* (with different phonetic variants), as well as a number of other names that will be discussed later. What unites all these communities is their common historical origin, their traditional occupations (production of various wooden wares), as well as the fact that the surrounding population considers them to be ‘Gypsies’ (‘Țigani’, ‘Cigany’, ‘Gypsies’, ‘Gitanos’, ‘Ciganos’ and similar names in local languages). However, these communities themselves (with some exceptions emerging in recent decades), reject their designation as ‘Gypsies’ and, more recently, as ‘Roma’. Their own community identities, however, can be quite varied and internally complex in various dimensions, including complicated structures at different hierarchical levels (local, ethnic, national and global).

Origin and Migration

In order to understand the phenomenon of these Romanian-speaking communities, we have to examine their origin and historical migrations. They originate from the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia where the so-called ‘Gypsies’ (Țigani) were slaves from the end of 14th century until the mid-19th century. There were three main categories of such slaves depending on whether they belonged to the Prince (slaves of the Crown), to the Orthodox monasteries, or to the Boyars (Noblemen). The Gypsies of the Prince were mainly nomadic, while the Gypsies of Monasteries and Boyars were mostly settled. The Crown’s Gypsies were divided into four basic categories, namely: 1. *Rudari* (ore miners) or *Aurari* (gold prospectors), also called *Băieshi* in Transylvania; 2. *Ursari* (bear trainers); 3. *Lingurari* (spoon makers); 4. *Lăieshi* (itinerant gypsies). There were also two kinds of Orthodox monastery and Boyars Gypsies, namely, *Lăieshi*, who were nomads, and *Vatrashi* (Domestic Servants, from the Slavic *vatra* ‘fireplace’), who served in households and tilled

their masters' land (Kogalnitchan 1837: 12-13, 15; Achim 1998: 31-85; Marushiakova / Popov 2009: 90-96).

As can clearly be seen, the origin and direct relationship of the Romanian-language speaking communities concerned and the respective categories of slaves (*Rudari/ Aurari/ Băieshi* and *Lingurari*) in the Danube Principalities can hardly give rise to any doubts. The issue of the ethnic dimensions of these categories is more complicated. In Romanian historiography, there used to be a popular theory that proclaimed, more or less categorically, the non-Roma (non-'Gypsy') origin of the *Rudari/ Aurari/ Băieshi* and *Lingurari* whereby they are descendants of an ancient non-Roma local population who acquired 'Gypsy' ethno-cultural traits (Achim 1998; Chelcea 1944ab, 1968; Calotă 1995; Șerban 2002). Genetic studies, conducted in recent years, however, have proved their common Indian origin with Roma and other 'Gypsy' communities (Klarić et al. 2008).

Many of the descendants of the *Rudari/ Aurari/ Băieshi* and *Lingurari* slave categories, migrated outside the two principalities during the second half of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, spreading all over Europe, with some reaching the Americas. However, a significant number of them continue to live in contemporary Romania. In present-day Romania, these Romanian-speaking communities use different self-appellations, but generally speaking, in Oltenia and Muntenia they are known as *Rudari*, in Moldova as *Lingurari*, and in Transylvania as *Băieshi* or *Beashi* (Chelcea 1944ab, 1968; Calotă 1995; Kovalcsik 2007; Marushiakova / Popov 2012; Alexa-Morcov 2012; Costescu 2012; 2013), although the boundaries of these territorial limitations are becoming increasingly blurred. These communities are detached from one another and in most cases, only publicly declare themselves to be ethnic Romanians, but at the same time they keep their community identities reflected in their respective self-appellations, each retaining (or at least endeavouring to preserve) its endogamy boundaries (including towards other communities of the same type).

Rudari, Lingurari and *Băieshi/ Beashi* in Romania nowadays tend to declare themselves to be "descendants of the ancient Dacians", "the oldest Romanians"; and from here emerges the conclusion that they are "the real Romanians". The confirmation for all that they find in their numerous and diverse myths and legends, e.g. about their Dacian "lost kingdom", or they explicate their Dacian origin through their traditional occupations ("we are the real Dacians because, like us, they have eaten from the same wooden utensils as we continue to produce").

However, the surrounding population in Romania even nowadays continues to perceive *Rudari*, *Lingurari* and *Bâeshi/ Beashi* as ‘Gypsies’ (Țigani), or even as a distinct community, which is connected to the Roma and occupies the same social position. This is not completely without reason: members of the *Rudari*, *Lingurari* and *Bâeshi/Beashi* communities only rarely participate in Roma political and civil movement, but still some of them became members of Roma political parties and Roma NGOs. Furthermore, on 28 February 1990 the *Partidul Unit Democrat al Romilor, Rudarilor și Lăutarilor din România* (Democratic Party of Roma, Rudari and Lautari in Romania) was established, headed by Octavian Stoica, which in the March 1990 elections received 21,847 votes (0,16%) (Popescu / Hannavy 2002). It is not clear what the *Rudari*’s contribution to this party was but judging by the result it was hardly significant.

In contemporary Romania, there are also other Romanian-speaking communities, which should not be mistaken with the aforementioned communities, and which are also considered to be ‘Gypsy’ (Țigani) by the surrounding population. They are descendants of the *Vatrashi* slave category and are known by various names, e.g. *Vatrashi*, or *Kherutne Roma* (i.e. those who live in houses in *Romanes*), *Kashtale Roma* (‘Wood Roma’ in *Romanes*, but a similar appellation is used also in regards of *Lingurari*), or ‘Țigani de mătase’ (‘Silk Gypsies’ in Romanian) (Burtea 1994; Cherata 1994, 1999; Marushiakova / Popov 2012). They have lost their group distinctions and have become a large meta-group community with partially preserved regional or local features. Most of them demonstrate a preference for a Romanian identity, but recently, as more attention has been paid to *Roma* issues, many of them “re-discovered” their Roma roots and are actively involved in Roma political parties and NGO’s, and publicly pronounce their Roma identity. And although these communities are sometimes grouped as one with the *Rudari*, *Lingurari* and *Bâeshi/Beashi* (e.g. under common name *Kashtale Roma*), in reality themselves *Rudari*, *Lingurari* and *Bâeshi/Beashi* clearly distinguish themselves, including through endogamous practices and detached identity.

A similar situation and similar processes of identity changes among the Romanian-speaking communities which are perceived as ‘Gypsy’ by their surrounding population, can be observed also in those parts of the former Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which are currently within the borders of other countries. Such is the case with the historical region of Bukovina, which was part of the Principality of Moldavia, later seized by Austria, and after World War I passed from Austro-Hungarian Empire to Romania. In 1940, the Soviet Union annexed Northern Bukovina which is today located in Ukraine, the Chernivtsi

region. The Romanian-speaking ‘Gypsy’ (‘*țigani/цигане*’ as their surrounding population calls them) communities living there demonstrate Romanian ethnic identity, but among them there are no communities of *Rudari*, *Lingurari* and *Bâeshi/Beashi*.

The situation is different in the eastern section of the Principality of Moldavia, between the rivers Prut and Dniester, known then as Bessarabia, which in 1812 was annexed by the Russian Empire. In order to increase the population of the rather sparsely populated southern steppe regions of Bessarabia (known as Budjak), the Russian Empire appealed to everyone who wanted to work and live under its authority, no matter if they came from the Russian Empire or from elsewhere. The Empire provided a number of incentives for them, such as loans, free land, tax exemption, as well as inclusion in a Black Sea Cossack army, which led to new additional privileges (Анцупов 2000).

In the process of colonization of Budjak, settlers from different countries and nations established their ethnic villages there, such as Bulgarians, Albanians, Czechs, Germans, Jews, Swiss, etc., including Roma, and among them “the most numerous groups in Bessarabia were the *Lingurari*” (Зеленчук, 1979: 59). As a result, the two ‘Gypsy’ villages of Faraonovka and Kair (Russian spelling of Cairo, today village of Krivaya Balka) emerged. These villages were established by former nomadic *Lingurari* who lived in the wooded massifs in the region of Orgeev (today Orhei) (Егунув 1864: 115; Анцупов 2000: 65-74). Currently, these two villages are in Ukraine, and the local Romanian-speaking communities are with “pure” Moldovan identity, i.e. they have been assimilated and have no (or at least they are unwilling to share publicly) memories of their former community identity (*Lingurari*), and their surrounding population no longer consider them as ‘Gypsies’.

In the second half of the 19th century, small *Lingurari* groups migrated within the Russian Empire in the region of Ukraine and southern Russia.

In 1913, “Gypsies” producing wooden spoons (ie *Lingurari*) lived in the Podolia region, in Ukraine (Трофимов 1913: 25-27). In the 1930s the Soviet state organized for them two artels for woodworking (ГАРФ: 74-75). It is not clear what the fate of this small community was during the Second World War, after which they no longer live in this region.

At present, the heirs of the *Lingurari* (circa 20 mixed families) live in the Krasnodar region of the Russian Federation. They have almost completely lost their former mother tongue and are generally Russian-speaking; most of them have mingled with local Roma (mainly from *Kishiniovtsi* group), adopted a Roma identity, and only some of them preserve the memory about their forefathers’ community identities (Смирнова-Сеславинская 2014: 156).

In the late 1940s, after World War II, part of *Lingurari* who were living in southern Russia migrated to the then Georgian SSR. There they mingled with other migrants, firstly with those who migrated in the 1930s from the then Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic with administrative centre Tiraspol and later, in the 1970s also with migrants from the then Moldovan SSR. There are currently 40-60 families (some of them from mixed marriages) living in independent Georgia, in the city of Tbilisi, who have partially retained their Romanian language; and although their surrounding population considers them ‘Gypsies’, their declared ethnic identity is ‘Moldovans’. They are without preserved memory about their former community identity and categorically refuse to be included in the activities of the modern Roma NGO sector (Marushiakova / Popov 2016a: 98).

Between the two World Wars Bessarabia became part of Romania and in 1945 it was annexed by the USSR and made into the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. In the Soviet times, some *Lingurari* migrated from Moldova to other Soviet republics. Currently, a small number of them live in Ukraine in the vicinity of Irpen near Kyiv, and also in different places in the Russian Federation (e.g. Republic Komi, and region of Tver) (Marushiakova / Popov 2003: 289-310). There they stick to their Moldovan ethnic identity and have largely lost their community identity of *Lingurari* (or it is only remembered by older generations).

When the USSR broke up in 1991, the Republic of Moldova became independent. At present, there live two distinct Romanian-speaking communities whom their population consider as ‘Gypsies’ (*Țigani*). These are *Vlaxia* (descendants of the *Vatrashi* slave category), and *Lingurari* (Marushiakova / Popov 2001a: 33-53; 2003: 289-310; Dumnică 2007: 294-303). Both communities are with publicly declared preferred Moldovan ethnic identity. Nowadays, some individuals from the communities of *Vlaxia*, however, in connection with the topicality of the Roma issues and in relation to the numerous NGOs and various international organizations’ projects, are actively involved in Roma activities and consequently demonstrate Roma identity. With the *Lingurari* the picture is much more complex. There is historical evidence that *Lingurari* lived in a number of villages, such as Bursuc, Huzun, Stejăreni, Leordoia, Lucășeuca, etc. Their heirs today reject the past and insist on their Moldovan ethnic identity, they deny any relationship with Gypsies (*Țigani*) including even their community identity of *Lingurari*.

In two other villages, however, namely in Parcani and Schinoasa, which are also largely populated by *Lingurari*, in recent years the NGO sector and international organizations have been implementing various ‘Roma’ projects. There the *Lingurari* accept without any resistance the label Roma given to them by donor organizations, even though in informal

conversations they deny to have something to do with Roma at all. And something more, their individual representatives are actively involved in activities of Roma NGO-sector, such as Dumitru Danu, president of Social Movement of the Roma from Republic of Moldova, and Gheorghe Marțin, president of Social-Cultural Society *Tradiția Romilor*.

From the lands of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, parts of the Romanian-speaking communities in question migrated initially to the neighbouring territories (at that time the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire). The first such migrations started in early 18th century, and at least since this time there is written evidence about them. Already in the 18th century it is known that *Beashi* live in Transylvania (Zsupos 1996), and probably also at that time some of them have settled in the lands of present-day Serbia as part of the general migration flows of a population of Wallachia and Moldavia south of the Danube.

It is not completely clear when the first migrants from these communities appeared in the lands of present-day Bulgaria but in the ethnographic map of European Turkey, prepared by Guillaume Lejean, in the region of Vratsa is noted the presence of a Romanian-speaking population (Lejean 1861). Today in this region there are two villages, Mramoren and Lilyache, inhabited by *Lingurari*. It is also certain that in the 1860s and 1870s in the region of Stara Zagora already live ‘Linguri Mechkari’ (Bear Trainers), which is something =quite common for the local population (КЪНЧЕВ 1983: 218), i.e. at least a few decades since their settlement there have already passed.

In the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, *Rudari/Ludari*, *Lingurari* and *Bâeshi/Beashi* resettled not only in different territories within both empires and the new independent states established on their place, but also in some countries of Western Europe, North and South America. (Fraser 1992: 226-238; Marushiakova / Popov 2006).

Geographical Distribution and Contemporary Identities

The review of contemporary identities of the Romanian-speaking communities in question shows their great diversity in different countries and regions.

Nowadays in Bulgaria there are communities of Romanian-speaking *Rudari* (or *Ludari*). The older self-appellation, *Aurari*, is also remembered, although comparatively rarely, by some elderly members of the community. This could be seen from a legend we recorded in 1990s in village of Yagodovo, in Plovdiv region. This legend explains not only origin of the self-appellation *Aurari*, but also the traditional occupation of the community:

“Once, before the Bulgarians united into one state, these lands roamed a tribe, our tribe. They came from Romania. And the craft they brought from there, and it was – washing gold from the rivers. Because of this they were called *Aurari* (Gold Washers) ... When the gold was exhausted in one river, they moved to another river. The rivers flow along the forests. The people of our tribe did not have vessels, so they made bowls from wood. When there was not enough ‘luda’ [from Slavic *ruda* ‘Ore’ – *authors note*], they were making wooden bowls and spoons for sale because they saw it was profitable. Over the years, the gold in the rivers was over, and then they began to deal only with wood, but their old name remained – *Rudari*.” (Marushiakova and Popov 1995: 29).

According to their traditional occupations, the community uses other self-appellations too, namely, *Lingurari* (‘Spoon Makers’ from Romanian) and *Ursari* (‘Bear Trainers’ from Romanian), *Kopanari* (‘Wooden Bowls Makers’ from Bulgarian), *Fusari* (‘Spindles Makers’ from Romanian), *Kashikchi* (‘Spoon Makers’ from Turkish), etc. This community is divided according to their home regions into *Monteni*, *Intreni*, *Kamchieni*, *Dobrudzheni*, *Tratsieni*, etc. (Petulengro 1915-1916: 1-109; Rațiu 1940: 18-24; ЙОНОВ 1995; Marushiakova / Popov 1997: 89-103; 1998: 106-116; СЛАВКОВА 2005: 277-294).

Rudari in Bulgaria live almost entirely in villages and in some small towns (former villages), spread over almost the whole of Bulgaria in separate (but in most cases not clearly detached) neighbourhoods. Without being completely comprehensive, we can provide the following picture of the settlements in which compact *Rudara* communities live according to the existing territorial administrative units and in brackets are the given names of villages or towns: region Vidin (Archar); region Montana (Boychinovtsi); region Vratsa (Mramoren, Lilyache, Drenovo, Harlets, Leskovec, Byala Slatina); region Pleven (Koynare, Iskar, Krushovitsa, Gorni Dabnik, Dolni Dubnik, Sadovets, Gradina, Cherven bryag); region Lovech (Aleksandrovo, Letnitsa); region Gabrovo (Dushevo Shumata, Yavorets, Polsko Kosovo); region Veliko Tarnovo (Krusheto, Zlataritsa, Strazhitsa, Kamen, Byala cherkva, Vinograd, Orlovets, Polski Kosovets, Kozlovets, Khotnitsa); region Ruse (Vetovo, Smirnenski, Khotantsa, Tetovo, Kosharna); region Razgrad (district Getsovo of Razgrad, Dryanovets, Kharsovo, Kubrat, Savin, Belovets, Brestovene, Golyam izvor, Osenets); region Targovishte (Zdravets, Podgoritsa, Roseno); region Shumen (district Matnitsa of Shumen, Tsani Ginchevo, Nikola Kozlevo, Markovo, Kosovo); region Dobrich (Obrochishte, Odartsi, Batova, Bobovets, Bezvoditsa, Stozher, Rositsa, Shabla, Karapelit, Tervel, Bezmer, Dabovik, Kolartsi, Kochmar); region Silistra (Kozyak, Mezhdan, Alfatar, Nova Cherna, Popina, Golesh, Kaynardzha); region Varna (Aksakovo, Suvorovo, Ignatievo, Izvorsko, Lyuben Karavelovo, Vaglen, Boyana, Valchi dol, Beloslav, Devnya, Zhitnitsa, Velichkovo, Avren, Dolen chiflik, Staro Oryakhovo, Grozdyovo, Osenovo, Pchelnik, Kazashka reka, Trastikovo, Yarebichna, Dalgopol); region Burgas (Kameno, Kableshkovo, Dolno Ezerovo,

Troyanovo, Balgarevo, Rudnik); region Yambol (Straldzha); region Sliven (Tvarditsa, Shivachevo, Brestovene, Zlati voyvoda, Mishkarovo, Korten, Tsenino, Asenovets, Bryastovo); region Stara Zagora (Yagoda, Obrochishte, Yulievo, Zimnitsa, Svoboda); region Haskovo (district Tchernokonevo of Dimitrovgrad, Aleksandrovo, Krepost, Nova nadezhda, Lyubenovo); region Plovdiv (Rozino, Yagodovo, Yoakim Gruevo, district Lyubenovo of Parvomay, Vinitza); region Pazardzhik (Vetren dol); region Sofia (Pravets, Dolna banya, Etropole); region Sofia City (districts Kremikovtsi and Botunets of Sofia). The regions of Smolyan and Kardzhali are not permanently inhabited by Rudari. Several families of Rudari live in region Pernik (city of Pernik), region Kyustendil (Bobov dol), in region Blagoevgrad (Rila and Yakoruda).

Representatives of this community speak about themselves most often as *Vlasi* (Wallachians) or *Rumâni* ('Romanians' in Bulgarian) (Marushiakova / Popov 2001ab; 2014a Marushiakova et al. 2001; Dorondel 2007; Şerban 2007), and even, though reluctantly, as *Rumânski Cigani* ('Romanian Gypsies' in Bulgarian). Their surrounding population considers them all as 'Gypsies' or 'Romanian Gypsies', but still there are some exceptions, when they are perceived *Vlasi* (Wallachians), e.g. in one police report from 1930s the community is defined "Vlasi vretenari" (Wallachians Spindles Makers), i.e. this report reflect their publicly declared identity (ДА: 37).

Over the past few decades the *Rudari* community in Bulgaria strove to develop and enrich their identity. They presented themselves as "true Walachians" or "the most ancient Rumanians". One of their popular legends, which can be heard in many places in Bulgaria, in a number of more or less similar variants, claims that the origin of the *Rudari* lies in their own ancient Kingdom of Dacia, located in the Balkans. Following its destruction, some Dacians crossed the Danube and laid the foundations of the Romanian people, while a smaller segment, the direct ancestors of the *Rudari* of today, remained in what later became Bulgaria; in another versions, the Dacian kingdom was placed in the lands of present-day Romania, and after its collapse the ancestors of the *Rudari* have settled in the Balkans (Marushiakova / Popov 2000: 86-87). More recently, other etiological legends began to emerge among the *Rudari* that link their origin to the ancient Thracians (Sorescu-Marinković 2011a: 52-53). This is probably related to the strong increase of the popularity of the Thracian historical heritage in the Bulgarian public space in recent years.

This *Rudari* identity development in Bulgaria is not unidirectional. They have not always opted for Romanian identity. In some cases, the *Rudari* try to link their origin to important moments in early Bulgarian history. This tendency is present in the ideology of

the political party *Democratic Movement 'Rodolyubie'* ('Patriotism' in Bulgarian) registered in 1998. According to its leader Ivan Kostov, it is a party of the *Rudari* community and the ethnonym *Rudari* is not derived from Slavic *ruda* ('Ore'), but from Slavic *rod* ('extended family' or 'clan'). As one of our informants said, 'we are descendants of the first old Bulgarian clans who settled in these lands together with Khan Asparukh at the time when the Bulgarian state was founded'. Another political party of the *Rudari*, called *Rodolyubie 2000*, led by Yulian Dimitrov, was established in 2001. This party participated in national and local level elections, and, according to its programme, defines itself as a Party of *Vlasi-Rudari* ('Wallachians – Rudari'), opting for a multidimensional and unspecified identity (Marushiakova / Popov 2014a).

Another expression of new community consciousness is the "Hymn of Rudari", which was used in the election campaign of the Rodolyubie 2000 party in the 2001 elections. This Anthem was created in 2000, text by Veska Pancheva from the village of Izvorsko, region of Varna, music Ivan Boyanov (we preserved the Romanian orthography of the anthem as written by its author):

Khimna na Rudarite

Astrânjeti toti Rudarii
Partidul noi să facene (2)
Cu lumea inainte să fine.

Pentru Rodoliubie glasoveți
Putere să avene (2)
Cu lumea inainte să fine.

Cu partidul noi ne luptăne
Cu Bulgarii împreuna să fine
Să vedene sin oi putene
Ceva bun sa facem.

Cu partidul asta noi ne luptane
Ochii să ne desfacene
Viață bună să avene
Pîine lesne să mîncăne.

Rudari Anthem

All Rudari gather together
So we make a party (2)
And the people to come first.

Vote for Rodoliubie
To have power (2)
And the people to come first.

We fight along with the party
To be together with Bulgarians
To see whether we can also
Make something good.

We fight along this party
To open our eyes
To have a good life
To eat a bread with no problems.

(Studii Romani Archive)

The relationship of the *Rudari* with the *Association of the Vlachs* (Romanians) in Bulgaria is unclear. According to the 2001 census, there was a ten-fold increase in the national declarations of 'Vlachs' or 'Romanians' mainly in North-eastern Bulgaria, which was brought about by the inclusion of the *Rudari* in this category. The last public initiative of the *Rudari* was a complaint lodged with the Commission for Protection against Discrimination with

appeal for the introduction of their 'Romanian mother tongue' as an optional school subject; their wish was granted in 2007. This seeming acceptance of the *Rudari* community as members of the Romanian minority, which has the right to have their mother tongue in the school curriculum, did not change the attitude of the society at large who continues to see the *Rudari* as 'Gypsies'. In spite of this, and regardless the benefits which they could receive as part of the Roma minority from different donors, *Rudari* in Bulgaria categorically refuse to be connected with Roma.

The processes presented above of the demarcation of the *Rudari* in Bulgaria as a separate community, clearly detached from both Roma and *Vlahs* (Wallachians) or Romanians, have substantially changed their dimensions over the past decade. This happens especially after Bulgaria joined the European Union and after the fall of all barriers to the cross-border labour mobility of Bulgarian citizens (including *Rudari*).

The *Rudari* in Bulgaria in the past were active nomads, some of them, e.g. the *Ursari* subdivision in Bulgaria, with a traditional occupation of Bear and Monkey Trainers, travelled cross-border on long distances. In the twentieth century, the *Rudari* gradually and at different times ceased their wandering way of life (the last *Rudari* nomads settled in the late 1950s). After their sedentarisation, they worked mainly in agriculture, with only a few *Ursari* maintaining their seasonal semi-nomadic lifestyle by taming bears and monkeys on resorts and village fairs within the country. In the 1990s, in the period of transition and economic crisis, many *Rudari* were left out of work, and as a way out of the situation in parts of *Ursari* occurred even a process of re-nomadisation. This re-nomadisation terminated after the campaign of animal defenders and the creation of the "Dancing Bears Re-Adoption Park" in Belitsa in 2000 for the "socialization" of the dancing bears bought from their owners.

Mixed marriages between *Ursari* and *Lingurari* within the large community of the *Rudari* have always existed, although in practice these two main divisions were distinguished (at least declaratively) as separate subdivisions of *Rudari*. After the disappearance of the traditional occupation (Bear and Monkey taming) this largely conditional delimitation quickly disappeared.

Rudari are among the first transnational labour migrants from Bulgaria who started to migrate already in the 1990s (firstly under various semi-legal forms, later legally), and at present most of the community is already working abroad for shorter or longer periods of time or even are already permanently settled in different countries (Slavkova 2008: 189-213; 2017: 42-69). When abroad, *Rudari* are part of Bulgarian migrant networks, but at the same time they maintain contact with each other and lead an active inter-community life including both

parts of the community – those who remain in the country and migrants. Notably, there is no evidence of contacts with local Rudari from the countries in which they work (e.g. with *Rudari* in Greece), nor with *Rudari*, *Lingurari*, and *Băieshi/Beashi* from other migrant-sending countries in the West. The inter-community life of the *Rudari*, working and living outside of Bulgaria, is greatly facilitated by the modern technologies as means of communication (Skype, Facebook, YouTube). The analysis of publicly available materials in the virtual space (especially movies and song clips on YouTube) shows the following: the internet networks of *Rudari* from Bulgaria are limited to being only among themselves, *Rudari*, *Lingurari*, and *Băieshi/Beashi* from other countries are not included.

From Internet networks we gain information about the places where *Rudari* work abroad, e.g. Athens, Kavala, Mytilini, Rethymno, Crete Island, Rhodes Island, Santorini Island, Agios Nikolaos, Ierapetra, Kiparissia, Malia, Tripoli, Analapisi, Xenia, Pyrgos, Patra, Moiras, Messini, Faliraki, Lamia, Volos, Veria, Kalamata in Greece; province of León, Zaragoza, Segovia, Santa Eufemia, Cantalejo, Palencia, Zuera; province of Tuscany, province of Calabria, Taurinova, Cesena, Bologna in Italy; Viena in Austria; Regensburg, Munich in Germany; Ghent in Belgium; Amsterdam in the Netherlands; Paris in France; London in Great Britain; etc. (Марушиакова / Попов 2013: 237-296). Naturally, this list is neither representative nor exhaustive in terms of all the places where the *Rudari* migrate, but it is still a good illustration of the scope of their labour mobility. Along with this, a number of *Rudari* settlements in Bulgaria are also mentioned: Letnitsa, Belene, Khotantsa, Smirnenski, Kozyak, Dryanovets, Lyuben Karavelovo, Ignatievo, Dolen Chiflik, Devnya (neighbourhood of Pavelyanovo), Straldzha, Yagoda, Maglizh, Yagodovo, Parvomay (neighbourhood of Lyubenovo), Izvorsko, Lenovo. This list is also not exhaustive, since *Rudari* in Bulgaria (as described above) live also in many other settlements.

The content of their own amateur video-recordings that are being exchanged is also quite indicative. In addition to the popular musical greetings, it also includes recordings of various family celebrations, New Year celebrations, various calendar holidays (including even playing *Kukeri* at their homes abroad), various family and friendly gatherings. Some recordings show the migrants' life of *Rudari* abroad, from displaying the rented dwellings to short videos with tourist attractions, and also their occupations (hired farm work, construction work, etc). Maintaining a broad network in the virtual space leads ultimately to the strengthening of the *Rudari* community identity, perceived always in a national context. So, it is no coincidence that the written correspondence (greetings, comments, etc.) is almost

entirely in Bulgarian while Romanian language is only used colloquially in Skype and in the greetings songs.

In this context, it is clear why across internet and social media networks the community self-appellation *Rudari* is not used, but rather their Bulgarian designation *Kopanari* (Wooden Bowl Makers) is commonly used to designate the community along with derivatives, such as ‘Kopanarska svatba’ (Kopanari’s wedding), ‘Kopanarski kyuchek’ (Kopanari’s belly-dance), etc. including created in 2011 ‘Kopanarski Khimn’ (Kopanari’s Anthem).

And something else, which is also quite indicative - in the text of the song called Kopanari’s Anthem, the main focus is already on the difficult life because of migration, after the *Rudari* were “forced” to leave their country and to go abroad (i.e. in other circumstances they would have preferred to live in their homeland).

Kopanarski Khimn

Noi sîntem marii rudari,
Tot n-avem noi paral’i,
Ne dućem în ciujbina să lucrem,
Să lucrem, să lucrem, să n’e turmuzem.
Noi sîntem marii rudari,
Tot n-avem noi paral’i,
Ne dućem în ciujbina să lucrem,
Să lucrem, să lucrem, să n’e turmuzem.
Aşt’a paral’i e ca bilegarii,
Dă li n-ai, dă li n-ai, mor tu du foami,
Aşt’a paral’i e ca bilegarii,
Dă li n-ai, dă li n-ai, mor tu du foami.

Ai noşt copii, ş-ei ca noi,
Ei dă mici lu-lucrează,
În ciujbină cu lupata,
Cu lupata, cu lupata să munceşt’i.
Ai noşt copii, ş-ei ca noi,
Ei dă mici lu-lucrează,
În ciujbină cu lupata,
Cu lupata, cu lupata să munceşt’i
Aşt’a paral’i e ca bilegarii,
Dă li n-ai, dă li n-ai, mor tu du foami.
Aşt’a paral’i e ca bilegarii,
Dă li n-ai, dă li n-ai, mor tu du foami.

Dă toţ rudarii!

Kopanari’s Athemn

We are the big Rudari,
But we don’t have money,
We travel abroad to work,
To work, to work, to torture ourselves.
We are the big Rudari,
But we don’t have money,
We travel abroad to work,
To work, to work, to torture ourselves.
This money is like manure,
If you don’t have it, you die of hunger.
This money is like manure,
If you don’t have it, you die of hunger.

Our children, like us,
Work from a young age,
Abroad, with a shovel,
With a shovel, with a shovel they work.
Our children, like us,
Work from a young age,
Abroad, with a shovel,
With a shovel, with a shovel they work.
This money is like manure,
If you don’t have it, you die of hunger.
This money is like manure,
If you don’t have it, you die of hunger.

For all the Rudari!

(Копанарски химн 2011)

A very different direction took the development of the small community of Romanian-speaking *Rudari* in Greece who are concentrated in Zefyri near Athens, Volos, Alexandria, Lamia (Sla mahala), etc. (Marushiakova / Popov 2012; 2014; Kahl and Nechiti 2012). The

surrounding population identifies them as ‘Gypsies’ (Τσιγγάνοι), and the *Rudari* for a long time shared this perception, though they consider themselves as a distinctive sub-division of the ‘Gypsy’ community. In recent years, however, more and more *Rudari* collaborate with Roma organizations, and in Zefiri they even established their own organisation, which is part of national Roma network and takes part in Roma projects.

Romanian-speaking communities, that are perceived by their surrounding population to be ‘Gypsies’, also lived in former Yugoslavia, and respectively they live now in the new post-Yugoslav states. Their identities, however, are quite varied across individual countries.

In the 1970s, in the Republic of Macedonia, in the village of Morodvis, near city of Kochani, lived Romanian-speaking *Linguri* (Баряктарович 1970: 150; Трифуноски 1973: 161-176). Nowadays, the villagers there publicly declare themselves as ethnic Macedonians, and deny that they have ever been others. Whether it is about deliberately chosen voluntary assimilation, or migration to other parts of Yugoslavia (the two options are not mutually exclusive) is hard to judge today. In any case, this is not an exception, as very similar is the situation in Surdulica (today in Serbia), where in the 1970s lived *Lingurci* who were Serbian-speaking and with Serbian ethnic consciousness (Трифунски 1960: 197; Баряктарович 1970: 151), but today they are no longer preserved as a separate community. In other cases, the processes of loss of community identity may not yet be definitively completed, although prospects in the near future are already clear, e.g. in the Kochani region, in a few neighbouring villages (Banya, Istibanya, Sokolartsi, Pishitsa) live small communities which in the past were Romanian-speaking. Their surrounding population calls them ‘Crni Vlasi’ (Black Wallachians) or ‘Romanski Cigani’ (Romanian Gypsies). They publicly (including in the Census of the Population) declared themselves ‘Vlasi’ (Wallachians), and more recently as ethnic Macedonians (Сикимић 2005a: 8). In the lands of present-day Serbia, Romanian-language speaking communities, considered by their surrounding population ‘Gypsies’, were documented already by Vuk Karadžić in the early 19th century (Sikimić 2005: 250), and have been described repeatedly in scholarly works (Ђорђевић 1932; Вукановић 1983) in past and present, and especially over the last two decades (Сикимић 2005b; Sikimić and Ašić 2008; Piramida 2011). Generally speaking, the surrounding population calls most often these communities with the umbrella term ‘Wallachian Gypsies’ or ‘Romanian Gypsies’, but they call themselves *Bayashi* in Vojvodina, *Banyashi* in Northwest Serbia, *Rudari* in Northeast Serbia, and contemporary migrants from Bosnia use the name *Karavlasi* (Black Wallachians), *Koritari* (‘Tub Makers’), etc. (Sikimić 2011a: 3-7; 2011b: 62-76; Sorescu-Marinković 2011b: 17-34; 2011c: 10-24). They live mainly in villages and

small towns that are mapped in detail by modern scholars – in Northwest Serbia (Posavina and Podunavlje) 85 settlements, in Pomoravlje 29 settlements, in Northeast Serbia 23 settlement, Banat 32 settlement, Bačka 7 settlements, Srem 1 settlement (Sikimić 2003: 151-153; Сикимић 2005а: 10-12).

The historical presence of Romanian-speaking communities in question on the territories of contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina was documented for the first time in 1725 (Sikimić 2011c: 231). Most often their self-appellation is *Karavlas* (Black Wallachians) and also *Bayashi*, *Lingurari*, *Gonari* (Tub Makers). In their own vernacular they are called *Ludaresti*, i.e. it is highly possible that the self-appellation of the community was *Ludari* in past (Pavković 1957: 103-126; Sikimić 2011c: 227-247; Stanković 2011: 42-48). In early 1920s, the *Karavlas* lived in the following settlements: Purkovići (probably close to Kalesija); Simići (an hour's walk from Vlasenica, close to the river Tišća); Knežina (close to the river Bioštica, Vlasenica region); Jadar (south of Srebrenica, close to the villages of Brežani and Čičevac); Kusonje – Ljeskovic; Kamenica (close to Kusonje, by the river Drinjača); Lopare, Modran, Batković, Maoča (these four settlements are in the Bijeljina region); the following seven settlements are in the Tešanj region: Špionica, Nemila, Vozuća, Ostružnja, Prača, Stanari, Pribinić; the village of Slatina (close to Banja Luka) and Sitnjež (Srbac region) (Filipesku 1906; 1907: 335-357). Today, *Karavlas* live mostly in several scattered enclaves: Batković (Bijeljina region), Lopare and Maoča (Mt. Majeveca), Ostružnja (Doboj region), Sitnež and Devetinja (Banja Luka region), and to the northeast in small settlements near the town of Vlasenica (Sikimić 2011c: 227-247). Many of the *Karavlas* are currently migrants in Serbia as well as in Western Europe, mainly in Germany and Austria, many of them already since the times of the former Yugoslavia.

The identities of these communities are diverse and varied in different regions and places. Community identity, more or less pronounced, almost always exists, but usually it fits into more general ethnic categories, the picture here being very diverse, and often contextual and situational. For example, in Banat, local *Bayashi* are most commonly self-identified (or at least declared) publicly as Romanians, in Bosnia and elsewhere as *Vlasi* (Wallachians), in Northeastern Serbia most often as Roma (more specifically as a Roma subdivision), etc. (Sikimić 2005: 252-252).

Identification as Roma became particularly strong during the last years, under the influence of the strongly increased relevance of the 'Roma issue' and implementation of national Roma programs and the numerous projects of Roma and Pro-Roma NGOs.

The situation is quite particular in the new independent country of Croatia, where local Romanian-speaking communities mainly use the self-appellation *Bayashi* (less commonly used are also terms *Karavlas*, *Koritari* and *Ludari*) and live mainly in the villages and cities of the following administration units: Bjelovar – Bilogora, Brod – Posavina, Koprivnica – Križevci, Osijek – Baranja, Međimurje, Sisak – Moslavina, Varaždin, Virovitica – Podravina, and Vukovar – Srijem counties (Saramandu 1997: 97-130; Radosavljević 2007: 505-515; 2011: 50-60; 2016: 185-195; Sorescu-Marinković 2011d: 36-51; 2011e: 131-141; 2011f: 173-226.).

The situation in Croatia today is unique due to the migrations of local Roma (so-called *Goptsi*) to Italy, which started before and continued after World War II, and consequently Roma migrations from Kosovo and Macedonia to Croatia after World War II, within the framework of the former Yugoslavia, which continued after its disintegration. Thus, in today's Croatia the remaining "local Gypsies" are only *Bayashi* and a few *Lovari* families, and in fact all Roma living there are new migrants, mostly Muslim Roma.

Under these conditions the local *Bayashi* identify themselves as a distinctive part of the *Roma* community and are with clearly expressed Roma identity (but without losing their community identity). The local *Bayashi* community is clearly distinguished from other Roma, and even has its own "anthem" (actually it is the same "hymn" which is used by Beash in Hungary, which will be discussed later).

This is reflected also in the names used in their periodicals (e.g. three-lingual journal *Glas Roma / Romano Akharipe / Graju alu Căganjilor*, published during 1994-1999) and in names of organizations, such as *Udruga Roma-Bajaša Međimurske županije*, *Udruženje Roma Bajaša Sisačko-moslavačke županije*, *Udruga Roma Ludari rumunjskog porijekla* in Slavonski Brod, *KUD "Bajaški crni biseri"* in Slavonski Brod, etc., who all are members of the umbrella national association, the *Union of the Roma Associations in Croatia*. As a consequence, the *Bayashi* in Croatia are currently a permanent object of realization of various national programs and European Roma projects, under the framework of which publications in Romani language appear, but in some cases under the caption 'Romani' the language used is actually Romanian (the mother tongue of *Bayashi*).

On the territory of present day Hungary, the presence of 'Romanian-speaking Gypsies' is reflected already in the famous *Gypsy Census conducted in Hungary on 31 January 1893* (A Magyarországon 1895), and also in *Research on the Situation of the Gypsies in Hungary on 1971* (Kemény et al. 1976), while in the recent years they are already labelled as 'Romanian-speaking Roma' (Kállai 2002). It is interesting to note that in academic works

the name used as a community designation is more often *Boyash*, whereas in life prevails the pronunciation *Beash*. Katalin Kovalcsik distinguishes three ethnic sub-groups of Hungarian *Beash*: *Muncsan* of the southern part of Baranya county are connected with the Croats living south of the border; *Argyelan* speak a Bánát dialect; *Ticsan* arrived from the Nagyvárad area from 1910-20, and after living in Szabolcs and Szatmár, they moved to the Tiszafüred area (Kovalcsik 1993: 231-244).

In the past, their identity was unambiguously *Cigany* ('Gypsy' in Hungarian) (Papp 1982ab; Bodi 1997), and some of them were even unaware that they speak Romanian and thought that the language they speak to be the 'true Gypsy language' (Kovalcsik 1996). In the post-communist period the politically correct designation for the community, *Roma*, appeared, which leads also to some changes in their identity. In 1992, the Gandhi High School was founded in Pecs and today it is supported by the Hungarian state and numerous foreign donors with the aim of establishing a *Roma* intelligentsia (Dezsö 2013). The school recruits students mainly from the local *Beash* community which leads to the construction of the *Roma* identity (Munk et al. 2006), however, some resistance also exists. As a result, today parts of the *Beash* have gradually adopted *Roma* identity (perceiving themselves as subdivision of *Roma*), the others parts preserve their *Cigany* (Gypsy) identity (in Hungary, local Hungarian-language speaking *Roma* also prefer to be called *Cigany*); the idea of the *Beash* as a separate, non-Gypsy and non-*Roma* community is also making inroads (Binder 2009). This leads sometimes to curious situations, e.g. the head of a well-known international *Roma* rights organization after publicly reporting on the *Roma* rights situation, during the break, told us that she is not *Roma* but *Beash* (i.e., according to her these are different, unrelated communities).

Reflection of the *Beash*'s complex ethnic identity in Hungary is also revealed in the so-called *Béas Himnusz* (*Beash* Anthem), which can be found on the Internet in different versions, e.g.:

Béas Himnusz

Padura vergye, padura vergye
noroku vinye, noroku mergye
gindu bacse bubujescse
lume cara misunyescse.

Lume cara ej sztrenu nosztru
kej beasu numa lontru
nyaj furat noj numa om kuj
dem kruse la Dimizo.

Beash Anthem

Green forest, green forest,
Luck comes, luck goes,
The thought beat, it bangs,
The world, the people are swarming.

The world, the people are our enemies
For the *Bayash* is only a thief.
But we have only stolen a nail
From God's cross.

Jarte, jarte Dimizoje
hinye jescse lume cara
nyej batut tu kum aj gangyit
luma cara nyo esztrenyit.

Mercy, mercy, God,
The world, the people should have mercy on us.
You punished us how you thought,
The world, the people alienated us.

(Original Béash 2005)

In fact, this is a widespread traditional folk song among *Beash* in Central Europe (Kovalcsik, 1994: 20). In the new social situation, this song acquires new, symbolic dimensions, and becomes an important public attribute of community identity. This process is taking place not only in Hungary, but as mentioned above also in Croatia, making it difficult to determine whether these are analogous, self-developing processes or a result of cross-border influences (probably from Hungary to Croatia).

Along with this version, *Beás Cigányok Himnusz* (Beash Gypsy Anthem) in *Romanes* is also widely spread on the Internet, performed by the popular band *Kalyi Jag*. In the clip, the song is sung against the background of the Roma flag (Beás 2018) and this is a good example of the influence of Roma national ideology in the virtual spaces, even in the case of communities such as *Beash* who, in real life, distinguish themselves in greater or lesser extent from the Roma.

In Slovakia live also small Romanian-speaking communities. They inhabit several separate settlements in Eastern Slovakia and are called *Korytári* ('Bowl Makers' in Slovak) or *Kanalosh* ('Spoon Makers' in Hungarian). They preserve their community ethnic identity in combination with their Romanian ethnic identity (Horváthová 1964: 80, 91; Stano 1965: 549-569), but publicly prefer to declare themselves Slovaks and to distance themselves from Roma. In the southern regions near the border with Hungary, in the Hungarian-speaking areas, a small number of *Bayashi* reside. They distance themselves from Roma; are with a preferred Romanian, and declared Hungarian identity (Agocs 2003: 41-53). In the city of Ostrava, in the Czech Republic, the *Korytári* migrants from Eastern Slovakia even registered a political party in 1990, under a name *Organization of Independent Romanians*, but it only survived for a few years.

The Sub-Carpathian foothills region was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the end of the First World War, in the period between the two world wars there was Czechoslovakia, after World War II the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and now it is part of Ukraine. Romanian-speaking communities from Sub-Carpathia are considered 'Gypsies' by the surrounding population, as are the *Korytári* in Slovakia, with whom they had family connections (Beníšek 2012). They identify publicly most often as Romanians,

and in the recent years, in connection with the contemporary political context, there is an increased the Ukrainian self-declaration. At the same time their community identity is *Kanalosh* ('Spoon Makers', from Hungarian), or *Tsygane Volokhi* ('Wallachian Gypsies' in Ruthenian/Ukrainian), or *Volokhi* (Wallachians). They live in 16 villages located mainly in the administrative districts of Velykyi Bereznyi and Perechyn (for example in Poroshkovo live about 1,500 Volokhi, which is more than half the population of the village) and also in the regions of Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Svaliava and Irshava. More recently, under power of Roma NGOs, and even more under influence of Evangelical Churches, some have reverted to a 'Gypsy' identity. In the competition between the faith and the new national Roma ideology, the latter has certainly a much weaker position, and only some individuals enter the Roma NGO sector (although they do not reject services offered to them).

Romanian-speaking communities, which are perceived as 'Gypsies' by their surrounding population, live also in other countries outside the region of Eastern Europe. Their identities under the new conditions of overall Roma mobilization are also quite varied.

A small *Ludari* community resides in the suburb La Mina of Barcelona in Spain, where they settled between the two World Wars. They are defined by their surrounding population as 'Gitanos'. For many years, they kept their separation from the local 'Gitanos' (the community of *Calé* in Spain), but in recent years in accordance with increasing importance of the Roma topic and the many national and international projects devoted to Roma, they established their own organization *Associació Ludari de Catalunya*. This organisation is member of the *Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña*, created in 1991, and nowadays it gathers 96 associations. The name of the association *Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña* is translated into English as *Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia*. This made it possible to interpret the *Ludari*'s new identity depending on the National or European context – as 'Pueblo Gitanos' in Spain, and as 'Roma' in Europe (FAGIC 2018). For *Ludari* in Spain themselves, however, the most important remains their community identity.

In the last quarter of a century, after the collapse of the so-called iron curtain, and especially after 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union, many *Rudari*, *Lingurari*, and *Băieshi/Beashi* from Southeast Europe (Romania, Bulgaria, and most countries of the former Yugoslavia), and to a lesser extent from Central Europe (Hungary) have migrated to Western Europe (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, United Kingdom, etc.). Initially, these labour mobilities were limited temporally (e.g. within one labour season), but now they increasingly become

permanent migrations, and many *Rudari*, *Lingurari*, and *Băieshi* are already firmly settled in these countries. In emigration, they remain mainly as detached parts of the respective national migrant communities from the countries of their origin. In general, they do not establish contacts with representatives of their kin communities from other countries (e.g. *Rudari* from Bulgaria with *Rudari* from Romania) or from the countries of emigration (e.g. *Rudari* from Bulgaria with *Rudari* from Greece). Even when representatives of these communities in emigration are trying to create virtual community unions (e.g. *Društvo Oamenii Nostri / Naš Narod - Naši Rumuni - Naši Banjaši* in Vienna), they remain ultimately limited within the countries of origin (Oamenii Nostri 2018).

At the end of the 19th century, migrations of the Romanian-speaking communities to the New World began – initially to the US and Canada, and between the two world wars to Latin America too. Currently, *Ludari* live in Argentina, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia, as well as in the northern regions of Mexico, the United States and Canada, where the name *Ludari* duplicates or replaces *Boyash*. Their identity is complicated and is in direct relation to the attitudes towards other ‘Gypsies’ (*Roma* and *Romanichals* in USA and Canada, *Calon* in Brazil, *Calé* in Spanish-speaking Latin America). As Anne Sutherland (2005: 1074) very accurately points out, in the United States local Roma do not consider them “real Gypsies”, i.e. *Boyash* are included as a separate, clearly defined and distinct subdivision within one community (‘Gypsies’). The same is the situation can be found in Latin America, where *Ludari*, together with the different Roma groups (*Kelderari*, *Lovari*, *Khorakhaya*, *Machvaya*, etc.), and *Calé* and *Calon* are perceived as part of the *Gitanos* and *Ciganos* communities. This attitude is reflected also in the work of perhaps the only one prominent intellectual from the *Ludari* community in Argentina, the writer Jorge Emilio Nedich, who wrote “Gitanos, una nación sin tierra” (Nedich 2006). On the whole, as far as the majority of *Ludari* are concerned, they remain outside of the ‘Roma-topic’, which has become so current in recent years. They are not included in the Roma Associations established in the last decades at national and international (Pan-American) levels, and remain mainly limited in their community identity.

Conclusion

As could be clearly seen from the brief review above, the identities of the Romanian-language speaking communities of *Rudari/Ludari*, *Lingurari*, and *Băieshi/Beashi/Boyash*, etc., viewed globally, are extremely diverse. They are structured at different hierarchical levels, depending on the context, and cannot be reduced to a single scheme, but vary according to country, regions and historical period. Accordingly, the leading trends in the development of these

identities also varied from the poles of voluntary assimilation (or at least attempts to assimilate) in the fabric of their surrounding societies to their incorporation into the global 'Roma Nation'. Of course, as it often happens in such cases, the extremes are least pronounced and very limited. In the first case of striving for assimilation - this occurs in small communities detached from other parts of the community that have lost the possibility of reproduction as a community. In the second case, it is more often a question of individual persons or parts of the community who display "outwardly" their acceptance of the new Roma identity. In between is the most common tendency - the preservation of the leading positions in the mosaic of their identities of the specific community identity, which nevertheless can fit into a more general ('Gypsies' or 'Roma') identity. The latter, however, remains abstract and only at a higher hierarchical level.

Another, no less important, question is whether in the case of the Romanian-speaking communities concerned (*Rudari / Ludari, Lingurari, and Bâieshi / Boyash, etc.*) one can speak of a community or it is more correct to speak of separate, independent communities. The answer is unequivocal and unambiguous – using the well-known terminology of Benedict Anderson's (1983) - it can be said that the communities under consideration are neither "real" (the members of the community do not know each other personally) nor even "imagined" communities (the members of the community do not know about the existence of the other parts of it).

In our case, the boundaries of the particular community are closed within the respective national borders of the countries in which they live. Even in cases where these borders are supranational (e.g. the countries of the former Yugoslavia or Latin America), in practice, the boundaries determined by national borders continue to exist (including from the point of view of the community endogamy). So, in fact, it turns out that the Romanian-language communities of *Rudari/Ludari, Lingurari, and Bâieshi/Beashi/Boyash* are united into one whole only by their researchers. In the context of the modern debate on the role of the "external" (and, in the first place, political) factors and of ethnic labelling in the construction of an ethnic community (van Baar 2011; Surdu 2016; Law and Kováts 2018; Marushiakova / Popov 2016b: 7-34) from the examples pointed above it became clear that at least for the communities under consideration, academia is not able to play a pro-active role in such a construction, and these communities are still looking for their own way of development (we would like to add – fortunately).

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