THE VLACH FUNERAL LAMENTS – TRADITION REVISITED

Abstract: In the present study I have analyzed three Vlach funeral laments, audio-recorded in 2004, during the fieldtrip to Valakonje, near Boljevac, Serbia. I have taken into discussion the dynamics of the Vlach community and its present state, with the coexistence of conservatism and transformation. The paper focuses on the performer and shows how, in spite of the fact that she is a guest worker, she is a perfect bearer of tradition.

1. The Vlachs – Short History

The Vlach community from Serbia is located in the North-East of the country, on the Serbian side of the Danube, bordering the historical province of Valahia from nowadays Romania. The history of this community is difficult to be sketched and it represents a highly controversial problem both among Romanian and Serbian historians and Vlach activists (Sorescu 2004). Nevertheless, it can be rendered as overlapping of multiple levels: primeval Balkanic roots; old Slavic influences; a long Romanian inhabitance of the region and, starting with the 17th century, successive, but numerous migrations, of different amplitudes, from the regions North to those South of Danube; as well as recent Serbian and Bulgarian influences. The inhabitants of this region are called, in the ethnographic literature, Țărani (countrymen), respectively Ungureni (Hungarians), which can be "re-read" as coming from the "Romanian Country", respectively from the "Hungarian lands". They speak two different dialects of the Romanian language: the Bǎnățean dialect and the Muntean one, which, however they do not use as written language. Their speech contains many Serbian words and phrases, Serbian being the Vlachs' written language.

2. Conservatism and Transformation

The true "resistance belt" of this community, due to which it managed to survive and to preserve its language and customs, is represented by the system of traditional beliefs. The big community ceremonies, family life
customs – most of all the extremely sophisticated cult of the dead, as form of an absolute attachment to the predecessors – and the spectacular system of oral transmission of the traditional repertoire are real traditional institutions regulating the community life and supporting the re-elaboration of this community’s identity. Nevertheless the overrating of these elements led to the fact that, for over a century, the very scarce, but however mentionable researches in the area¹ have described it only as an "ethnographic paradise", as a region where one can still discover interesting and archaic folklore texts, as a "reservation" where things that have been long forgotten elsewhere survived, as a "museum in the open air", administrating itself on its own (Hedeșan 2004).

1.1. Guest Workers

Even if this region is a highly conservative one, its inhabitants have been very mobile for the last fifty years. After the Second World War, large waves of people from the rural areas started migrating to the industrialized regions, but the local industry found itself unable to absorb the surplus of labour from the country. After this "first step" of (internal) migration, the workers, due to the imperfections and flaws of industrialization and to the unstable situation of agriculture, on the one hand, and to the favourable conjuncture of the international labour market, on the other hand, started migrating abroad. Official emigration from socialist Yugoslavia began in 1965, after the government launched a radically liberal reform of the country’s economy. Anticipating a sharp increase in unemployment caused by the sudden introduction of a free market, the country’s leadership officially accepted the necessity of employment of Yugoslav citizens abroad.

Post-liberalization emigration from Yugoslavia can be divided roughly into three periods. The first substantial wave (1965–1973) was purely labour-oriented and directed towards Western European countries, which recruited workers in order to fill job vacancies in their booming economies. More meager emigration characterizes the following 15 years, until late 1980s. The majority of Yugoslavs who left their home country did so mainly in order to join family members already established abroad. By the end of the 1980s the Yugoslav economy had entered a phase of severe economic crisis. Consequently, the economic motivation to return weakened, whereas the desire to emigrate increased tremendously. In the beginning of the 1990s, political, economic and social collapse of the former Yugoslavia resulted in the exodus of a substantial number of persons (Kogan 2003).

¹ See, for example, Bucuța 1923, Dumitrescu-Jippa and Metea 1943, Petrovici 1942.
Emigration reached exponential rates between 1965 and 1973, the outset of economic crisis in Western Europe. By 1973, the number of Yugoslav citizens in European and overseas countries had grown from a few thousand to almost one and a half million (Schierup and Ålund 1986: 23, Vesić 1978: 10). As far as the percentage of Vlach workers from abroad is concerned, different studies show contradictory figures. While foreign researchers state that the percent of Vlachs working abroad was about four times bigger than that of Serbs, Serbian researchers of the moment, reflecting Yugoslavia’s politics from that period, were insisting on the fact that the number of Vlachs in the region and, consequently, working abroad, is insignificant. However, Yugoslavia’s different ethnic groups of migrants all shared a general historical-structural context of migrancy and the ultimate goal of return and reintegration. But the concrete processes of migrancy among individual groups have varied greatly in relation to socio-professional, cultural and historical factors. With the Vlachs, this mass migration of workers had the fewest traits of emigration – partly because of the considerable investments into the property, household and economy (Marijanović 1981), partly because of the regular return home, at certain, well established dates – and can also be defined as return migration.

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2 "About 8 per cent of the total population in Wallachian villages were working abroad in 1971 versus 2 per cent in ethnic Serbian villages.” (Schierup and Ålund 1986: 48)

3 "Because in Eastern Serbia the Serbs are most numerous, in comparison with other nationalities, we must expect that their percentage in the number of Yugoslavs working abroad is also the biggest. From the total number of people working abroad, the Serbs represent 97% (…). The departure of the Vlachs is not significant and they participate with a little bit more than 1%, which is 468 souls.” (Vesić 1978: 115) The author uses the data offered by the Serbian census of 1971.

4 "Migrancy" connotes the continuous processual character of migration in opposition to the conventional depicting of migration as a definite decision and act; that is, the once and for all passage of the migrant from one type of social system to another. Mayer showed that the various instances usually abstracted from the migration process as a whole – emigration, immigration, integration, remigration, etc. – cannot be studied in isolation from one another. They are inseparable parts of a wider social process, each part of the same contradictory social reality.” (Schierup and Ålund 1986: 21)

5 "All important rites of passage among Wallachian immigrants remained firmly tied to the Yugoslav hinterland. To our knowledge, not a single Wallachian wedding, baptism, burial or pomana took place in Scandinavia during the two decades of migrancy.” (Schierup and Ålund 1996: 469)

6 "Return migration is defined as the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle. Migrants returning for a vacation or an extended visit without
Miloš Marjanović, in a paper about Vlach guest workers, analyzes the variety of terms used for addressing the phenomenon of Yugoslav people working abroad: *jugoslovenski radnici na privremenom radu u inostranstvu* (“Yugoslav citizens temporarily working abroad”, the euphemism reflecting Yugoslavia’s official policy in the question of international labour migration); the more neutral: *migrants, emigrant workers* (when referring to people) or *economical emigration, outer work migrations* (when referring to the phenomenon of migration); some terms which are speaking for themselves: *new slaves, Europe’s pariah, niggers of Europe, the tenth member of the Europe’s economical community*; and two German terms: *Fremdarbeiter* (“foreign workers”) and *Gastarbeiter* (“guest workers”). As far as this latter term is concerned, the author notes that, in spite of its cynical connotation (“guest usually don’t work and if they do they don’t clean the streets”), it is now in use both in Germany and in Serbia. In Serbian, the expression *gastarbajtersko selo* is used to refer to the most important structural characteristic of a village (Marjanović 1995: 248).

As two Scandinavian researchers put it (in a study which deals with the formation of a Vlach immigrant ethnic community in Denmark and Sweden and takes into discussion the reasons of obstinately preserving the ethnic identity and traditional customs), ”for the vast majority of Walachians – young and old – the primary point of identification remained the village or the local area of origin in Yugoslavia. One’s link to the local microcosm in Yugoslavia would end in the homestead and the house, for the sake of which years of hard work and abstinence in Scandinavia had been sacrificed” (Schierup and Ålund 1996: 468). It is a well known fact that Vlach migrants use most of their savings for investments in huge houses in their villages of origin and in agricultural machines and tools – investments definitely connected to „prestige games” among migrant households, but also representing the justification for emigration: that of conveying a social status that the migrant lacks in his country of adoption.7

the intention of remaining at home are generally not defined as return migrants, though in some settings it is difficult to distinguish analytically the migrants returning home for a short visit or seasonally from those who have returned permanently.” (Gmelch 1980: 136)

7 ”Migrant investments in the Wallachian villages of origin are definitely connected to ”prestige games” among migrant households. However, the competition for prestige in the local village context cannot be compared with investments for accumulation, or the quest for social status mobility in capitalist industrial society. House building is not primarily a way of showing that one is richer than one’s neighbour. It represents the justification for emigration and conveys a social status from which the migrant is alienated in Scandinavia. In the same time, a continued social attachment and loyalty to the community of origin is demonstrated. In this
1.2. *The Cult of the Dead – Pomana and the Laments*

This continued reproduction of the attachment to the hinterland through “investments” is supplemented by ritual and ceremonial practices. All the *rites of passage*, all the important ceremonies in the life cycle of the Vlach immigrants are held within the community, in the native places. From these, the most important by far are the customs connected to the so-called cult of the dead. The Vlach ancestor worship and the very complex cult of the dead roused the interest of generations of researchers, who, with the risk of offering the image of a monovalent culture, focused only on this element, whose spectacular quality is however indisputable. Once the dead departs, the village community, and especially the family of the bereaved, does not break all the connections with her/him, but continue to cultivate the relationship in a variety of ways. It is believed that the deceased has the same needs in the world beyond as in this world. It is, thus, the duty of the living to make provision for these needs, until the soul establishes itself in the other world. These provisions for the dead are carried out both by Serbs and by Vlachs in North-Eastern Serbia through the practice of *pomana*, a ceremony of remembrance. All food and drink consumed at a *pomana*, as well as the songs, the candles, the flowers, the garden with flowers, are offered to the deceased, in whose honour the ceremony is conducted. The *pomane* form a cycle performed at certain intervals after death. Among Serbs, this cycle is completed after one year, while among Vlachs, the *pomane* cycle, which has a much greater social importance, is significantly longer: the last *pomana* is held seven years after the day of death. Some commentators concluded that this last *pomana* means breaking of all the connections with the deceased. However, the "contact" with the deceased does never stop:

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9 "Not only is it given "de pomana" the specially prepared feasts related to certain established dates, but "the soul" of the deceased is offered almost everything, like, for example: the wheel dancing, the songs, the garden with flowers, the first fruit etc. This is evidence of the persistent concern to assure to the deceased, by means of different ritual acts, the cosines of a life which, according to the traditional beliefs, is totally identical with this one. This life is continued, in almost all of its aspects, in the other world." (Janković 1972)
"(The last *pomana*) only means the closing of the cycle of regular *pomane*, but even after that, with the occasion of every holiday in the family, they (the family) continue to offer food to the dead one. This is done even by granddaughters and great granddaughters, for as long as the memory of the deceased is alive" (Janković 1972: 91).

A very important part of almost every *pomana* are the laments (the Vlachs do not have an equivalent noun; they say *măcint* which approximately means "I'm singing myself"). They can be divided into strict form laments (e.g. *numărătura mare* "big counting", *zorile* "the dawns", *bradul* "the fir tree", *petrecătura* "the farwell", *mărturia* "the testimony") and improvised laments. Like other poetic folklore forms, the laments are composed of short rhymed lines. The "language of death" focuses on the physical and emotional movements caused by death and on traveling, as a modality of passing from the world of the death to the one of the living and the other way around. The laments are facilitating the imaginary communication between the deceased and the living. Most of the topics are repeated in all the laments that are sung in every sequence of the funerary ritual, which adds to the general redundancy of the ritual. Some parts of the laments, are temporary and spatially associated with certain ritual acts, like, for example, taking out the coffin from the house or entering the graveyard (Kligman 1998). In the present paper I will focus on the improvised laments sung with the occasion of the last *pomana* – seven years after the death, in a Vlach village from North-Eastern Serbia.

3. Material and Analysis

The present study is based on the audio-recorded material collected during the fieldwork from September 18th 2003 in the Vlach village Valakonje, near Boljevac, Serbia, where we took part to the last *pomana* organized for Stanka Petrović, deceased seven years before.

The organizers of the ceremony were the closest relatives of the deceased – her two sons with their wives and the niece with her husbands – together with some neighbours from the village, mainly old women. One of the sons with his wife lived in the house of his mother, where she died and where *pomana* was going to be held, the other one and his family has been living and working in France for more than fifteen years. I will focus on this latter’s wife, Bosiljka Petrović, the daughter-in-law of the deceased, who represented "the engine" of the ceremony, taking care that everything is carried on according to the traditional norms and performing, solo or together with the neighbours, the laments, in different moments of *pomana*. Bosiljka Petrović – or Bosa, as everybody called her – was born in 1950 in Valakonje. She left for France in 1985 and, until 2001, she was coming back
to Yugoslavia once a year. From 2001, when her father got sick and died, she has been partly living in France, partly in Serbia, looking after her mother.

3.1. The Three Laments

The preparations for the ceremony that lasted until late in the evening started at dawn.

a) The first ritual act of pomana was laying the clothes for the deceased in the meadow. Everything must be new – sheets, blankets, pillow, clothes (underwear, skirt, shirt, socks, jacket, scarf, shoes etc), the bag and all the things inside it (mirror, handkerchiefs, hair comb etc). The deceased is metaphorically "dressed up". The women first "make the bed", then arrange the clothes on the sheets in a way resembling the dressing up of a person: they lay on the underwear and gradually the other clothes: the socks are carefully put in shoes, the sleeves of the shirt are shoved into the sleeves of the jacket and, in the end, the scarf is tied and carefully laid on the pillow, where the head should lay. After this, the three women who performed it (Bosa and two old women from the village – Stana Miucić (1928) and Natalija Kerić (1930)) sat down and started to lament, invoking the deceased to come, see the clothes, dress up, meet the family and the neighbours and join them for lunch. This lament lasted 17 minutes and its melodic line changed once.

b) Later, while the women were preparing lunch and the ritual breads for pomana and men were frying the pig, Bosa went to the cemetery, to "give" food and water to the deceased. This was the second very important moment of the ritual, accompanied by Bosa's solo lament, which was approximately 10 minutes long. This was the shortest of the three, but it must be taken into account that she is the only one singing alone, which is much more demanding, due to the difficulty of the melodic line.

c) After this, while part of the women were still in the house, preparing pomana, and part of them outside, arranging the big table and wreathing flowers for cununa ("the wreath") that was going to be put at the end of the table, three old women from the village (among whom the two already mentioned, Stana Miucić and Natalija Kerić) were singing the third and last lament of day. It was 45 minutes long and changed its melodic lines two times.

10 It should have been slobozirea apei (the "freeing" of water for the deceased), but it was not performed.
11 In the same way in which the lament, as a special form of communication, is specific for establishing a dynamic dialogue, the body is an indispensable participant at the cemetery.
12 More about this lament, as well as its transcript in Sorescu Marinković 2004.
Slavoljub Gacović, analyzing a wider material, collected with the Vlachs Ungureni, divides the free improvisation laments into four categories (Gacović 2000: 11-12):

1) **Lamenting for the deceased** (să lălăie dupa-l mort) – right after the funeral, the close relatives (only women) sing a lament with fixed melody. They are mentioning the most important happenings from the life of the deceased, which they usually witnessed (wedding, building of the house etc).

2) **Singing for the deceased** (să cîntă dupa-l mort) – every woman improvises the melody and lyrics, according to her relation with the deceased. It is not necessary that the lamenting women are relatives with the dead.

3) **Singing at the clothes** (cîntat la țoală) – at forty days, half a year, a year and so on, until the seventh year after the funeral, always with the same melody and improvised lyrics.

4) **Singing at the grave** (cîntat la mormînti) – the deceased is called for at pomana which is prepared for her/him at forty days, half a year, a year, until the seventh year, always with the same melody and improvised lyrics.

Gacović's classification is somehow incomplete, because the second category could as well include the last two. On the other hand, the last two are not structurally different. They are, indeed, sung in two different moments of the ritual and some lines are associated with certain acts, but the main motives and the structure are identical.

All of the three laments we are focusing on have more or less the same melodic line and their structure can be sketched as follows:

a) Introductory formula: the deceased is invoked to wake up/come to the world of the living.

b) The lamenters beg her to talk to them or tell her to come "on their voice".

c) The dead is invited to join them for lunch/dinner or to see the clothes they prepared for her.

d) People who came at pomana are enumerated – relatives and neighbours.

e) The deceased is asked to walk and talk with the beloved ones.

f) Ending formula: the lamenters offer as pomana their song.

The comparison between the three laments sung during pomana does not reveal important structural differences. The three laments are very similar, structurally and melodically speaking.
3.2. Women – Bearers of Tradition

The Russian folklore school has elaborated a series of well-documented studies on the role of women as preservers and transmitters of customs and beliefs in the traditional communities, as well as on the differences between women and men folklore. Nevertheless it is common knowledge that one of the main roles of women in traditional communities is exactly this: bearers of tradition. “Tradition is a temporal concept, inherently tangled with the past, the future, with history” (Glassie 1995: 396) and it encompasses the whole series of customs, legends, beliefs, ritual acts and behaviours and magic that are handed down from generation to generation, often by word of mouth or by example.

In the Vlach communities this seems to be truer than anywhere else. Here, women are “the most important bearers of ideology (...): it is women who pass on magical practices, cults and mythology, knowledge of traditional herbal medicine and other types of curative techniques for the body and the mind. Women can be an evil ”vraj” (witch), who destroys marriages or call down misery on a family; they can also be the “good” or “white” ”vraj”, who can help a fellow sister to bring back her infidel husband, restore harmony in a household, or bring a vampire to a proper rest in the grave” (Schierup and Ålund 1986: 156). This, correlated to the special type of family and household of the Vlachs – which contrasts with the predominant system in the Balkans in which households are basic social units centered on the man, male inheritance and control through principles of patrilinear descendent – gives the Vlach women an overwhelming role, both in society, and in preserving of tradition.

As far as magic practices with the Vlachs are concerned, there are series of strictly feminine rituals. We can mention, from the yearly cycle rituals, Lăzărița (which takes place before Easter and is performed by little girls who are dancing and older women who are singing) and Paparudele (ritual of invoking the rain, performed by young unmarried girls). With the Vlachs, as well as with other people, charms are a typically feminine genre, created by women and reflecting a feminine semantic universe, centered on female identity, occupations, values and actions. It is very important


14 “Connected to the performance of magical messages, the typical and most frequent situation is that of the specialized feminine role.” (Coatu 1998: 41)

15 See Golopenția 1998 for a gender analysis of Romanian love charms.
to notice that female "shamanism" was also encountered with the Vlachs of this region and has been practiced until recently. As for the rituals of the life cycle, the child birth is an exclusively feminine ceremony, the midwife (moașa) playing a very important role both in helping with delivery and in the social life of the village. Old women in general are the fittest to perform ritual and magic acts. During the burial and after that, with the occasion of pomane, it is also women who organize and perform the ritual acts and, most important, who actualize the magic text – singing for the deceased.

Bosa, despite her being abroad for so long, is definitely a genuine bearer of tradition. Apart from organizing this very important pomana, her singing alone in the graveyard is the ultimate trial in terms of proving her knowledge of traditional norms.

3.3. Improvisation and Rule

Pomana is a very strict ritual, which has a clearly determined organization. The laments that are performed during pomana belong to the sphere of magic texts. This means they have a very precise structure and they function only if this structure is obeyed (just like the charms). Even if they have been classified as free improvisation laments, the improvisation refers only to the parts that make reference to the life of the deceased and to the family that gathered for pomana. The three laments represent a set of variants, from the large corpus of laments, not new individual creations. Not respecting the norms of the traditional system of laments has, as a result, the canceling of the magic force of the lament. What seems to be improvisation is nothing but a very good knowledge of the corpus of laments, of the existing variants and of the rules that coordinate the functioning of these discourses. You cannot "improvise" unless you know the rule. You cannot choose from the numerous variants the one that perfectly fits in the given situation if you are not a keen preserver and transmitter of tradition, which Bosa definitely is. If the first lament is sung together with the other two women, who act as "controllers" of the text, she performs the second one alone, producing a perfectly functional text.

3.4. Tradition and Language – an Obituary?

Teaching is so fundamental to the function and process of folklore that tradition cannot exist without it. Tradition bearers must be master
teachers in order to ensure the continuity of their knowledge, which they usually transmit to their children or grandchildren. Bosa is a perfect teacher, but in a quite atypical situation for the conservative communities. She is transmitting her knowledge to her daughter, who has spent most of her life in France and who is no longer proficient in the local idiom. Furthermore, her daughter has a double perspective and role, during the ceremony: she is both the French researcher, who came to study Vlach customs and to audio-record the Vlach idiom, and the youngest woman in the Vlach family, to whom the knowledge must be passed. But, while Bosa’s return to the native land is possible, her daughter will most probably never return for good or pass on the knowledge she inherited. So, even if tradition is still alive, Bosa seems to be the last real bearer in the family.

It has been written that, when a community moves to some other place, its members are slowly losing their cultural identity. They take on the language of the new place, to various degrees, and their original language cannot usually resist more than one generation (Kristal 2003: 106). Within a generation – sometimes even within a decade – a healthy bilingualism within a family can slip into a self-conscious semilingualism, and thence into a monolingualism which places that language one step nearer to extinction. American sociolinguist Joshua Fishman once referred to this state of affairs as the “folklorization of a language” – the use of an indigenous language only in irrelevant or unimportant domains (Kristal 2003: 117). Thus the language becomes a form of behaviour familiar only to the enthusiast, the specialist, and the seeker after curiosities.

But what can be said about tradition? The tradition of a community which loses its language is also dying. There is an indestructible connection between these two. However, the way languages dye is different from the way traditions dye. There are other factors and patterns involved in the two processes. It is impossible to determine a chronology of obsolescence of language and tradition. However, for the sake of parallelism, we can use the expression ”folklorization of tradition” to denote the erosion of the original role and value of tradition.17 In our situation, tradition will be preserved (like the language), but in a highly intentional manner, with the help of the latest technologies, and not by passing it on, orally, from generation to generation. This, however, might prove to be a source of revitalizing tradition in the modern world.

17 Ilić was proposing the introduction of the expression culture shift to parallel the sociolinguistic term language shift for denoting ”the process of big pragmatic and cultural changes the traditional culture is subject to, under the influence of global civilization modifications, as well as the process of dying of a specific system of traditional cultural norms.” (Ilić 2005)
So, Bosa's performance and her daughter taping it might be an emblematic image for the traditional communities facing the challenges of the new millennium. Even if folklorization of tradition seems to be imminent, this is by far an obituary. For a community which does not have a written language, preserving its corpus of customs and ritual, in this "high-tech" form, for the generations to come, is an incommensurable gain.

4. Conclusions

So far, the researches of the Vlachs from Northeastern Serbia have been oriented in two main directions: on the one hand, on the traditionalism and conservatism of this community (mainly on the very complex and unique cult of the dead) and, on the other hand, on their extraordinary mobility outside the borders of the country (as guest workers in different Western European countries). The researchers who focused on traditionalism were mainly ethnologists and folklorists and they talked about the area as a true "ethnographic paradise", where you can still discover interesting and archaic folklore texts. However, they were not interested in the informers, their personal perception and background. The researchers who investigated the phenomenon of work or economic migration with the Vlachs were mainly sociologists and they took a great interest in the relations within the sub-communities from the host countries, between younger and older generations, the investments in the hinterland and the subsequent "prestige games". As far as tradition is concerned, the two things always emphasized were the fact that the Vlach guest workers are keeping and performing their customs in the host countries and that, when back in the villages of origin, they want to impress by the huge quantities of food exhibited and consumed at weddings or baptizing and by the immense dowries. Until now, the connection between the guest workers and the folklore texts – their personal perception, methods of transmitting the text, modalities of performing the ritual and differences of perception between the guest workers and other members of the community – was insufficiently researched.

In the present paper I have tried to approach the Vlach funeral laments comparing a set of three laments performed during the seventh pomana by a group of villagers and a woman from the same community who has been living and working in France for more years. The comparison rendered evident that, apart from some small differences, all the three laments have the same structure. In spite of the fact that she has been a "Gastarbeiter" for almost ten years, Bosa is a perfect bearer of tradition and a master teacher. The study also takes into discussion the problems that the Vlach community is facing in the new millennium, in terms of transmitting its folklore and tradition, and suggests that "folklorization of tradition" might
prove to be an acceptable means of preserving the corpus of knowledge for the generations to come.

However, this is only one of the possible approaches. Due to the fact that the material collected at this *pomana* is quite impressive, both in terms of quantity and quality of information, the researcher can also focus, in a future study, on the ritual as a whole, on the context of the folklore text or on the meta-textual comments of the informers.

**The first lament**

Vii, řevastă, vino, vīi, řevastă, vin-u  
Vino bińişoru, vino bińişoru  
Vino pin la noi-u  
He-e-ha-ha

Că e vr'em'ea bună, că e vr'em'ea bun-u  
Bun de pr'eumblatu, bun de pr'eumblatu  
Pè unde-ai umblat-u  
He-e-ha-ha

Că-t va fi măi doru, că-t va fi măi dor-u  
Să mērgi pin oboru, să mērgi pin oboru  
Vii, řevastă, vin-u  
He-e-ha-ha

Pe-al nostru glăscioru, pe-al nostru glăscior-u  
Pe car'-ai doritu, pe car'-ai doritu  
Eľe ţ-a vėňit-u  
He-e-ha-ha

Că lē par'e rău, că lē par'e rău-u  
Da măi mult l-e doru, da măi mult l-e doru  
Vii, řevastă, vin-u  
He-e-ha-ha

V'in la prêmeñeľe, v'in la prêmeñeľ-u  
Să ce-mbraş în eľe, să ce-mbraş în eľe  
Şi să né pr'eumblăm-u  
He-e-ha-ha

Că şciu că t-ă doru, că şciu că t-ă dor-u  
Au de pr'eumblatu, au de pr'eumblatu

Come, wife, come, come, wife, come  
Come softly, come softly  
Come to us

Because the weather is good, the weather is good  
Good for taking a walk, good for taking a walk  
Where you used to walk

You must be longing, you must be longing for  
A walk in the yard, a walk in the yard  
Come, wife, come

On our voice, on our voice  
The ones you wished, the ones you wished  
They came for you

Because they suffer, because they suffer  
But they are longing more, but they are longing more  
Come, wife, come

Come to the clothes, come to the clothes  
To dress them up, to dress them up  
And to take a walk together

Because I know you're longing, I know you're longing
Pi la f'emi-ţ-iu For a walk, for a walk
He-e-ha-ha To the family

Vii, ńevastă, Stanko, vii, ńevastă, Come, wife Stanka, come, wife Stanka
Stank-u Come softly, come softly
Vino biţişoru, vino biţişoru And enter in the yard
Şi tună-n obor-u
He-e-ha-ha

Că noi ce-aşceaptămu, că noi ce- Because we are waiting for you, we are
aşceptăm-u waiting for you
D' e prînzî făşemu, de prînzî făşemu Cooking lunch, cooking lunch
În drum tot ţ-uităm-u Keep looking on the road
He-e-ha-ha

Doru vei v'eńir'e, doru vei v'eńir-u Hoping you would show up, hoping
Toţu să prînzîmu, toţu să prînzîmu you would show up
La zbor să ńe dăm-u To have lunch together, to have lunch
că noi ce-aşceptămu, că noi ce- together
aşceptăm-u And start talking
D' e prînzî făşemu, de prînzî făşemu
He-e-ha-ha

Mult să ce-ntr'ebămu, mult să ce- To ask you a lot, to ask you a lot
ntr'ebăm-u What kind of life you found, what kind
Şe trai ai aflatu, şe trai ai aflatu of life you found
D' e bas ţ-ai muitat-u That you completely forgot us
He-e-ha-ha

Or a gazd-ai aflatu, or a gazd-ai aflat-u Or you found a husband, or you found
Și mult nu ce lasă, și mult nu ce lasă a husband
Să vii pe la noi-u And he's not letting you, and he's not
He-e-ha-ha letting you

Roagă pr'e milosu, roagă-ce milos-u Come to us
Zi, ńevast-aşa-r'e, zi, ńevast-aşa-r'e Ask the Merciful, ask the Merciful
Multu m-aş rugar'-u Say, wife, like this, say, wife, like this
He-e-ha-ha I would kindly ask you

Să mă slobăziţu, să mă slobăziţ-u To set me free, to set me free
Să mă ducu-ducu, să mă ducu-ducu To go, to go
Pin la casa mea-r'u To my house
He-e-ha-ha

Caută, mă strigă, caută, mă strig-u They are looking and calling for me,
Doamne, la prîmenele, Doamne, la looking and calling
prîmenele,
Să ce-embrasă în e-l-iu God, to the clothes, God, to the clothes
He-e-ha-ha To dress them up
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text in Romanian</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Da mult om aşceaptă, da mult om aşceapt-u</td>
<td>And there are a lot of people waiting, people waiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doamne, şi cu prinzu, Doamne, şi cu prinzu, Toţu să prînzîm-u</td>
<td>God, for lunch, God, for lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He-e-ha-ha</td>
<td>To have lunch together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au cu f' em'elia, au cu f' em'eli-u</td>
<td>With the family, with the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noră din deparce, noră din deparce</td>
<td>Daughter-in-law from far away, from far away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doamne, cu ţepeaot-u</td>
<td>God, with the niece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He-e-ha-ha</td>
<td>Revisited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Changing of the melodic line)</td>
<td>Come just in time for lunch, just in time for lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vino baş de prinzu, vino baş de prinzu</td>
<td>Tonight for dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ia pê nana Sţeva, ia pê nana Sţeva</td>
<td>Take uncle Steva, take uncle Steva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Să vină şi el-u</td>
<td>So he comes too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cîta pi la noiu, cîta pi la noiu</td>
<td>A little bit to us, a little bit to us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au pi la fiśior-iu</td>
<td>Or to his son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Că şciu că-i e doru, că şciu că-i e doru</td>
<td>Because I know he’s longing, I know he’s longing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A plecat ciņerel-u</td>
<td>He left young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vii, řevastă, vino, vîi, řevastă, vîno</td>
<td>Come, wife, come, come, wife, come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vîno, nană, vîno</td>
<td>Come, uncle, come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toţî vă vorbiţu, toţî vă vorbiţu</td>
<td>All of you to agree, all of you to agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doamne să veńiţ-u</td>
<td>God, to come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Că sînt’e ştr un cîrdu, că sînt’e ştr un cîrdu</td>
<td>Because you’re a crowd, because you’re a crowd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cîrd de řem’eli-u</td>
<td>Crowd of family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da iar s-a ruga-r’e, da iar s-a ruga-r’e</td>
<td>But she would ask, but she would ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosa ea de cîn-iu</td>
<td>Bosa would ask you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Să iai tat-al eiu, să iai tat-al ei-u</td>
<td>To take her father, to take her father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Să vină şi el-u</td>
<td>So he comes too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pe la casa luiu, pe la casa lui-u</td>
<td>To his house, to his house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Să rămînă-râmîn-u</td>
<td>To stay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doamne, domâcino, Doamne, domâcin-u,  
Bora să să duc-u  

La soția luiu, lo soția luiu,  
La nepoții lui-u  

Toți vă vorbițu, toți vă vorbițu  
Doamne, să veniț-u  

Strugur'el din vie, strugur'el din vie  
Prostită vă fi-iu  

Glasu nostru voauă, glasu nostru voauă  
Glâscioru cu gorn-u  

Vîntu va băcear'ê, vîntu va băcear'ê  
Glasu va dușear-iu  

Voi veț ascultar'ê, voi veț ascultar'ê  
Să vă răcoriț-u  

Pe glas să venețu, pe glas să venețu  
Cîta pi la noiu.  

Uite-așa, glasu și vorbili să fie la  
nevasta Stanka și la nana St'eva și să fie  
și la tat-al tău. Să m' eargă cu țoalili. Să  
fie la fimelie, la toată cari va fi p-lingă  
ea.  

The second lament  

Scoală, maică, scoală, scoală, maică,  
scoală,  
Scoală bișișoru, scoală bișișor-u  
Eee-hă-hă  

Scoal, t' e pomeńeșt' e, scoal, t' e  
pomeńeșt' e  
Și cu noi vorbișt' e, șì cu noi vorbișt'-e  
Eee-hă-hă  

P' e drum să pl' ecămu, p' e drum să  
pl' ecămu  
Acas-ajunjem-u, acas-ajunjem-u  
Hăă-lele-hă-hă  

God, you host, God, you host  
Bora to go  

To his wife, to his wife  
To his grandchildren  

All of you to agree, all of you to agree  
God, to come  

Dear grape from the vineyard, grape  
from the vineyard  
To be for your soul  

Our voice to you, our voice to you  
Our dear voice with the bugle (?)  

The wind will blow, the wind will blow  
And carry the voice  

You will listen, you will listen  
To refresh  

To come on the voice, to come on the  
voice  
A little bit to us.  

Like this, the voice and the words to  
be for wife Stanka and uncle Steva and  
for your father. To go with the clothes.  
To be for the family, for all the family  
that is there with her.
A. Sorescu Marinković, The Vlach Funeral Laments – Tradition Revisited 215

Śina să śinămu, śina să śinămu
Cu lumėa să vorbimu, cu lumėa să vorbim-u
Hăă-lele-hă-hă

Lălă cu lumėa vie, lălă cu lumėa vie
Baş cu fămelie, baş cu fămelı-u
Hăă-lele-hă-hă

Lălă cu-aï tăi copiū, lălă cu-aï tăi copiū
Lălă cu comşıiu, lălă cu comşı-iu
Hăă-lele-hă-hă

Baş cu-aï tăi népoţu, baş cu-aï tăi népoţu
Lălă cu-ailală toţu, lălă cu-ailalalı toţ-u
Hăă-hă-hă

Lălă al tău oboru, lălă al tău oboru
Că şciu că ț-ă doru, că şciu că ț-ă dor-u
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

Baş la prăvălie, baş la prăvălie
Pl'ınă de lume vie, pl'ınă de lume vi-u
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

L-âl' e premeńel' e, l-âl' e premeńel' e
Să t' e-mbraš în el' e, să t' e-mbraś în el' e-e
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

Ai cu bîtu-n mînă, ai cu bîtu-n mînă
Baş ca o muiere bătrînă, baş ca o muiere bătrînă
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

Mîna să ț-o dămu, mîna să ț-o dămu,
Să t' e prijunîmu, să t' e prijunîm-u
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

P' e scam să şăďemu, p' e scam să şăďemu
Lălă, s-odîinimu, lălă s-odîinîm-u
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

Lălă, masă-n'insă, lălă, masă-n'insă
Cu lumiń aprinsă, cu lumiń aprins-ă
Oo-lălă

Baş cu lume ocol'ită, baş cu lume ocol'ită

To have dinner, to have dinner
To talk to people, to talk to people
With living people, with living people
With the family, with the family
With your children, with your children
With the neighbours, with the neighbours
With your grandchildren, with your grandchildren
With everybody else, with everybody else
In your yard, in your yard
Because I know you’re longing, I know you’re longing
In the court, in the court
Full of living people, full of living people
At the clothes, at the clothes
To dress them up, to dress them up
Come with the stick in your hand, the stick in your hand
As an old woman, as an old woman
To give you our hand, give you our hand
To support you, to support you
To sit on the chair, sit on the chair
And have a rest, have a rest
The laid table, the laid table
With burning candles, with burning candles
With nice people, with nice people
With the neighbours, with the neigh-
Lălă, cu comşîiu, lălă, cu comşî-iu
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

Lăl, cu femelie, lăl, cu femelie
Lăl, cu lum'é vie, lăl, cu lum'é vie
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

Strugur'el din vie, strugur'el din vie
Bogdapros să-ț fie, bogdapros să-ț fi-u
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

Glasu m'eu ție, glasu m'eu ție
Lălă, și vorbile, lălă, și vorbil-u
Hăă-lălă-hă-hă

The third lament

Vino, ăi
Vino bișișor-u-ăi
Vino pin la noi-u
Noi mult așectăm-u
Noi mult așectăm-u
Cunină cu dor-u
Să vîi pin la noi-u
Toțu să șinâm-u
La zbor să ńe dâm-u
Noi să te-n'trebâm-u
Traiu cum trăiești-u
De săpce an de zil’-u
Doamne, a trecut-u
Noi nu ńe-am văzut-u
Pă tiă nu ț-ă dor-u
De-ai dăio fișori-u
De doauă nurori-u
De cîrd de ńepoț-u
Lor l’-e dor la toț-u
Dor și par'e rau-u
De băbuța lor-u
Vii, ńevastă, vin-u
Vii cu nana St'ev-u
Viiți amânași-u
Dau la șină cald-u
Toțu să șinâm-u
Că șciu că v-ă dor-u
Rugați-va voi-u
De stăpâni vostr-u
Doamne, să vă las-u

bours
With the family, with the family
With living people, with living people
Dear grape from the vineyard, grape
from the vineyard
To be for your soul, to be for your soul
My voice to you, my voice to you
And the words, and the words

Come,
Come softly
Come to us
We have been waiting a lot
We have been waiting a lot
Wreath with longing
To come to us
To have dinner together
To start talking
To ask you
What's your life like
Seven years
God, have passed
We haven't seen each other
Haven't you been longing
For your two sons
For your two daughters-in-law
For your crowd of grandchildren
They are all longing
And suffering
For their granny
Come, wife, come
Come with uncle Steva
Come both of you
To the warm dinner
To have dinner together
Because I know you're longing
You ask
Your masters
God, to let you
Doamne, într-o sar-u
Doamne, într-o sar-u
Ca cucu-ntr-o var-u
Rugaț-vă voi-u
Doamne, măi milos-u
De să nu-i miñe-iu
Zișeți voi așa-r’iu
Ma ducu, ma duc-u
Pin la casa mea-r’iu
Caut că mâ strîg-u
Baș la șină (...)
Șina s-o șinâm-u
La zborsă șe dâm-u
Că șe dor la toț-u
Și nouă și lor-u
Vii, șevastă, vin-u
Vino, nană, vin-u
Vițăt amindoi-u
Da luvaț cu voi-u
Cîrd de șe mă-i iu
Să vină cu voi-u
(Changing of the melodic line)
Vii, șevastă, viño,
Vii, șevastă, vin-u
Vino binișnor-u
Vino, nu-ță munita-r’è
Vino, nu-ță munita-r’è
Au de bucuva-r’u (?)
Vin să te-ntrăbâm-u
Vin să te-ntrăbâm-u
Da ț-a măi trcuit-u
(Changing of the melodic line)
C-ai plîcat bolnavă
C-ai plîcat bolnav-u
Doamne-n strînatat’-u
Vin să te-ntrăbâm-u
Vin să te-ntrăbâm-u
Doamne, d-ai primît-u
Toale de-mbracăcat-u
Toale de-mbrăcat-u
Că ce-a fiimat-u (?)
Apă de spălat-u
Apă de spălat-u
Prînzu de prînzit-u
(Changing of the melodic line)
Dauă Stankului
Șe noi șe rugâm-u
Au că șe-am imprăunat-u
Că șe-am prăunat-u
Fimeľ’ia toată

God, in an evening
God, in an evening
Like the cuckoo in a summer
You ask
God the Merciful
Not to get angry
Say like this
I’m going, I’m going
To my house
They are looking and calling for me
For dinner (...)
To have dinner
To start talking
Because all of us are longing
Both we and they
Come, wife, come
Come, uncle, come
Come both of you
But take with you
The crowd of family
To come with you
Come, wife, come
Come, wife, come
Come softly
Come, don’t forget (us)
Come, don’t forget (us)
(?)
Come to ask you
Come to ask you
If you are better now
Because you left sick
Because you left sick
God, abroad
Come to ask you
Come to ask you
God, if you received
Clothes to dress up
Clothes to dress up
Did you receive (?)
Water to wash up
Water to wash up
Lunch to eat
I’m giving to Stanka
We are praying
Because we all came together
We all came together
All the family
Fimel’ia toat-u  
Au, bre, Stanko şi comşio  
Bre, Stanko şi comşii-u  
Vino, Stanko, vin-u  
La strigatu nostru  
Au, şi la rugatu nostru  
Şi la rugatu nostru  
Dauă, Stanko, vodu (?)  
Da tot nu răspunz-u  
Au, da Stanka ar răspunde  
Stanka ar răspund-u  
Numă n-ar đe unď-u  
Că s-a depărtat-u  
Au, şi s-a înstreinat-u  
Au, şi s-a înstreinat-u  
Fă-ce, Stanko, păsăric-u  
Fă-ce, Stanko, păsăric-u  
Au, şi zboară într-un prun-u  
Au, şi zboară într-un prun-u  
Ş-ascultă şe io-ţ spuń-u  
Ş-ascultă şe io-ţ spuń-u  
Au, da glasu viu în zăr’-iu  
De doru şi va trăeşte-r’iu  
De doru şi va trăeşte-r’iu  
A, da doru de obor-u  
Doru de obor-u  
Şi de prăvăli-iu  
Şi de lum’ea vi-iu  
Vino, Stanko, bişişor-u  
Vino, Stanko, bişişor-u  
Noi grijă să av’ em-u  
Să ţă sprijunăm-u  
Să ţă sprijunăm-u  
Vracniţa s-o đeşchiďem-u  
Vracniţa s-o đeşchiďem-u  
Să tuńo în obor-u  
Să tuńo în obor-u  
Au, da de unde ț-ă dor-u  
De unde ț-ă dor-u  
Vintu va băcea-r’u  
Vintu va băcea-r’u  
Au, şi glasu-l va duşea-r’è  
Glasu va duşea-r’iu  
La ceńe va străbăcea-r’iu  
La ceńe va străbăcea-r’iu  
Vino, Stanko, vino, Stanko  
Vino, nu ţe uita-r’iu  
Vino la fiśior’-u  
Stanko, la nurori-iu  
Au, mai mult la ţepoţăi-iu

All the family  
Stanka, our neighbour  
Stanka, our neighbour  
Come, Stanka, come  
When we are calling  
And asking  
And asking  
I'm giving to Stanka (?)  
But you're still not answering  
But Stanka would answer  
Stanka would answer  
Just that she can't  
Because she distanced  
And became a stranger  
And became a stranger  
Stanka, change into a bird  
Stanka, change into a bird  
And fly to a plum tree  
And fly to a plum tree  
And listen to what I'm telling you  
And listen to what I'm telling you  
The living voice in the distance  
Will cure your longing  
Will cure your longing  
The longing for your yard  
The longing for your yard  
And for your court  
And for the living world  
Come, Stanka, softly  
Come, Stanka, softly  
We'll take care  
To support you  
To open the gate for you  
To open the gate for you  
To enter in the yard  
To enter in the yard  
You have been longing for  
You have been longing for  
The wind will blow  
The wind will blow  
And carry the voice  
Carry the voice  
It will reach you  
It will reach you  
Come, Stanka, come, Stanka  
Come, don’t forget us  
Come to your sons  
Stanka, to your daughters-in-law  
Or better to your grandchildren
Mai mult la ńepoţăi-iu
De cînd tu ai pl'ecat-u
Au da ei-u ńe-a cr'escut-u
Da ei ńe-a cr'escut-u
Car' e s-a însurat-u
Da şî s-a maritat-u
Vino, Stanko, bînişor-u
Vino, Stanko, bînişor-u
Da cînd toţ äi videa-r’iu
D-atunše-ai ocoli-r’iu
Au de drag n-or mâi pucea-r’ê
De drag n-or mâi pucea-r’iu
De mânuţa lor-u
Da şî de ei de t’in-u
Au, da şî tu bańş de ieî-u
Şî tu bańş de ieî-u
Vorbêşece, au, frumos-u
Roagă-ce, milos-u
Au, de stăpînii tăi-u
De stăpînii tăi-u
Sä ce lasâ într-o sar-u
Ca cucu într-o var-u
Vino, Stanko, bînişor-u
Vino, Stanko, bînişor-u
Soţîia, sâtoia-iu
Stanko, bańş, cu ciń-iu
Au, soţie şî femeliia
Soţie şî f’emel-iu
Stanko, pari în jor’-u (?)
Au, dâ şî surâtar’-iu
Au, câ mult de mult s-a dus-u
De multu s-a dus-u
Strugur’el din vi-iu
Bogdapros să ãt mai fie
Bogdapros să-ţ fi-îu
Au, glăsśioru din obor-u
De unde ţ-ä mai dor-u
Vino, Stanko, vino, Stanko
Vino, nu ńe muita-r’iu.

Better to your grandchildren
Since you left
They’ve grown up
They’ve grown up
Some got married
Some got married
Come, Stanka, softly
Come, Stanka, softly
When you see everybody
You will enjoy it so much (?)
You will be so happy
You will be so happy
Because of their hand
They will love being with you
And you being with them
And you being with them
Talk nicely
Ask the Merciful
Or your masters
Or your masters
To let you one evening
Like the cuckoo in a summer
Come, Stanka, softly
Come, Stanka, softly
Your husband, your husband
Stanka, with you
The husband and the family
The husband and the family
Stanka (?)
To kiss you
Because he left so long ago
He left so long ago
Dear grape from the vineyard
To be for your soul
To be for your soul
The dear voice from the yard
You missed the most
Come, Stanka, come, Stanka
Come, don’t forget us
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**ВЛАШКЕ ТУЖБАЛИЦЕ – ДРУГИ ПОГЛЕД НА ТРАДИЦИЈА**

**Резиме**

Рад анализира три влашке тужбалице снимљене приликом једног седмогодишњег помена (помана) у селу Валакоње у близини Бољевца, Србија, 2004. Размотрена је динамика влашке заједнице и њено садашње стање које карактерише коегзистенција конзервативизма и процеса трансформације. Поред култа мртвих, и данас карактеристичног за влашку културу у Србији, рад фокусира и активну улогу појединца у преношењу традиције. Саговорник на терену, истовремено и извођач тужбалица, показао се као одличан носилац традицијске културе упркос чињеници да дуги низ година живи и ради у Француској као гастарбайтер. У прилогу рада донети су транскрипти анализираних тужбалица.