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Summary

ON SHOPI AND SHOPLUK

Although the records of Shopi and Shopluk can be found in researchers from the 19th century to the present day, there is no agreement on the issues such as the territory they inhabited, their origin, speech / dialect and cultural characteristic. Researchers from Serbia, Bulgaria and the Republic of Northern Macedonia disagree on the aforementioned issues. The reason for the disagreement comes from the first records, but also from later research, in which Shopluk is spoken of as a territory that includes a wider and narrower area. At the same time, according to some, the area of Shopluk includes the area of Torlak, while according to others it represents a special area. The only thing agreed on is that this is the territory in the Balkans that today belongs to the aforementioned countries, but not to the geographical borders. There is no agreement on whether the territories were inhabited by the Shopi and the Torlaks, ie whether it is one ethnic group or two, and in that context also their origin, language and culture. However, although there are different theories about the origin, none of them denies their Slavic component. Apart from the first records about Shopi and Shopluk, doubts are also caused by historical events, perhaps it is better to say the fate of the inhabitants of this part of the Balkan Peninsula and the defining state borders after the Berlin Congress, after which the population, not having a sufficiently developed awareness of their origin and affiliation - identity, declared themselves differently, in order to fit into the state-political borders, which was also used for political purposes in the 70s of the 19th century. They refused to declare themselves as Shops, but mostly declared themselves as Bulgarians (with the exception of the population around Sofia), Serbs or Macedonians. The reason for this statement is the pejorative connotation, which implies a simple, uncultured mountain man. When it comes to a recent research, especially in Serbia, during the 20th century, Shopi and Shopluk are mostly mentioned in the context of discussions about the area of Torlak, which is related to the geographical area of Pirot. It is interesting that the censuses in the Kingdom of Serbia distinguished between the Serbian and non-Serbian population, and even after the Second World War, until 2011, the Shopi were classified as others. By expanding the code list of national affiliation, the last census enabled us to obtain data on the citizens of Serbia who belong to this national minority and speak the Shop language. Having in mind the age structure of members of the Shop population, this seems to be a moment to pay more attention to multidisciplinary research in the field.

Keywords: *Shop, Shopluk, origin, territory, language*