

= Banat Bulgarians =

The Banat Bulgarians (Banat Bulgarian : palʔene or banátsʔi balgare ; common Bulgarian : ????????? ??????? , banatski balgari ; Romanian : Bulgari bʔnʔeni ; Serbian : ????????? ?????? , Banatski Bugari) are a distinct Bulgarian minority group which settled in the 18th century in the region of the Banat , which was then ruled by the Habsburgs and after World War I was divided between Romania , Serbia , and Hungary . Unlike most other Bulgarians , they are Roman Catholic by confession and stem from groups of Paulicians and Roman Catholics from modern northern and northwestern Bulgaria .

Banat Bulgarians speak a distinctive codified form of the Eastern Bulgarian vernacular with much lexical influence from the other languages of the Banat . Although strongly acculturated to the Central European region , they have preserved their Bulgarian identity . Since the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878 , many have returned to Bulgaria and founded separate villages there .

= = Population = =

The official Romanian census states that 6 @, @ 468 people of Bulgarian origin inhabit the Romanian part of the Banat . The Serbian census of 2002 recognized 1 @, @ 658 Bulgarians in Vojvodina , the autonomous province that covers the Serbian part of the Banat . Bulgarian researchers estimate that 12 @, @ 000 Banat Bulgarians live in Romania and 3 @, @ 000 in Serbia .

The earliest and most important centres of the Banat Bulgarian population are the villages of Dudeʔtii Vechi (Stár Biʔnov) and Vinga , both today in Romania , but notable communities also exist in Romania in Breʔtea (Bréʔʔa) , Colonia Bulgarʔ (Telepa) and Denta (Dénta) , and the cities of Timiʔoara (Timiʔvár) and Sânnicolau Mare (Smikluʔ) , as well as in Serbia in the villages of Ivanovo , Konak (Kanak) , Jaʔa Tomiʔ (Modoʔ) , and Skorenovac (Gjurgevo) .

In Bulgaria , returning Banat Bulgarians populated the villages of Asenovo , Bardarski Geran , Dragomirovo , Gostilya , and Bregare , among others , in some of which they coexist or coexisted with Banat Swabians , other Bulgarian Roman Catholics , and Eastern Orthodox Bulgarians .

= = Historical population = = =

According to various censuses and estimates , not always accurate , the number of the Banat Bulgarians varied as follows :

= = History = =

= = Origin and migration north of the Danube = = =

The Bulgarian Roman Catholic community in the north @-@ western ore @-@ mining town of Chiprovtsi and surrounding villages was possibly established in the Middle Ages by " Saxon " miners , who later migrated elsewhere or were assimilated . In 1688 , the members of the community organized the unsuccessful Chiprovtsi Uprising against the Ottoman rule of Bulgaria . The uprising was suppressed due to organizational flaws and the halting of the Austrian offensive against the Ottomans . Around 300 families of the surviving Catholics fled north of the Danube to Oltenia , initially settling in Craiova , Râmnicu Vâlcea , and other cities , where their existing rights were confirmed by Wallachian Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu . Some moved to south @-@ western Transylvania , founding colonies in Vinʔu de Jos (1700) and Deva (1714) and receiving privileges such as civil rights and tax exemption .

After Oltenia was occupied by Austria in 1718 , the status of the Bulgarians in the region improved again , as an imperial decree of 1727 allowed them the same privileges as their colonies in Transylvania . This attracted another wave of migration of Bulgarian Catholics , about 300 families

from the formerly Paulician villages of central northern Bulgaria . They settled in Craiova between 1726 and 1730 , but did not receive the same rights as the colonists from Chiprovtsi .

The Habsburgs were forced to withdraw from Oltenia in 1737 in the wake of a new war with the Ottoman Empire . The Bulgarians fled from this new Ottoman occupation and settled in the Austrian @-@ ruled Banat to the northwest . The Austrian authorities allowed them to found the villages of Stár Bi?nov in 1738 and Vinga (or Theresiopolis) in 1741 . In 1744 , a decree of Maria Theresa of Austria again confirmed their privileges received in Oltenia .

= = = Austrian and Hungarian rule = = =

Around a hundred Paulicians from the region of Svishtov and Nikopol migrated to the Banat from 1753 to 1777 . The existing Bulgarian population quickly spread throughout the region from the late 18th to the second quarter of the 19th century . They settled in around 20 villages and towns in search of better economic conditions , specifically their need for arable land . Such colonies include those in Modo? (1779) , Kanak and Stari Lec (1820) , Belo Blato (1885) , Bré??a , Dénta , and Banatski Dvor (1842) , Telepa (1846) , Gjurgevo (1866) , and Ivanovo (1867) .

After they settled , the Banat Bulgarians began to take care of their education and religion . The Neo @-@ Baroque church in Stár Bi?nov was built in 1804 and the imposing Neo @-@ Gothic church in Vinga in 1892 . Until 1863 , Banat Bulgarians held liturgies in Latin and " Illyric " . Illyric was a strain of Croatian which had spread in the communities before they migrated to the Banat . However , with their cultural revival in the mid @-@ 19th century , their vernacular was gradually introduced in the church . The revival also led to the release of their first printed book , Manachija kathehismus za katolicsanske Paulichiane , in 1851 . " Illyric " was also substituted with Banat Bulgarian in education in 1860 (officially in 1864) . In 1866 , Jozu Rill codified the dialect with his essay Bálgarskotu pravopisanj .

After the Ausgleich of 1867 , the Hungarian authorities gradually intensified the Magyarization of the Banat . Until World War I , they imposed Hungarian as the main language of education .

= = = Interwar Romanian and Serbian Banat = = =

After World War I , Austria @-@ Hungary was dissolved and Banat was divided between Romania and Serbia . Most Banat Bulgarians became citizens of the Kingdom of Romania , but many fell inside the Kingdom of Yugoslavia .

In Greater Romania , the Banat Bulgarians ' identity was distinguished in censuses and statistics . The main language of education was changed to Romanian and the Bulgarian schools were nationalized . A Romanian geography book of 1931 describes the Bulgarians in the county of Timi? @-@ Torontal as " foreigners " , and their national dress as " not as beautiful " as the Romanian one , but in general the Banat Bulgarians were more favourably treated than the larger Eastern Orthodox Bulgarian minority in interwar Romania .

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia denied the existence of any Bulgarian minority , whether in the Vardar Banovina , the Western Outlands , or the Banat . Official post @-@ World War I statistics provide no data about the number of the Banat Bulgarians . In comparison with the Eastern Orthodox Bulgarians in Yugoslavia , the Banat Bulgarians were treated better by the Yugoslav authorities , although Serbo @-@ Croatian was the only language of education .

In the 1930s , the Banat Bulgarians in Romania entered a period of cultural revival led by figures such as Ivan Fermend?in , Anton Lebanov , and Karol Telbis (Telbizov) . These new cultural leaders emphasized the Bulgarian identity at the expense of the identification as Paulicians and Roman Catholics , establishing contacts with the Bulgarian government and other Bulgarian communities in Romania , particularly that in Dobruja . The organs of this revival were the newspaper Banats?i balgars?i glasni? (Banat Bulgarian Voice) , issued between 1935 and 1943 , and the annual Banats?i balgars?i kalendar (Banat Bulgarian Calendar) , issued from 1936 to 1940 . There was a plan to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the settlement in the Banat which was the most significant manifestation by Banat Bulgarians in that period . It was partially spoiled by the

Romanian authorities , but still attracted much attention among intellectuals in Bulgaria . The Bulgarian Agrarian Party , a section of the National Peasants ' Party , was founded in 1936 on the initiative of Karol Telbizov and Dr. Karol Manjov of Stár Bi?nov , with Petar Telbisz as its chairman , and the Bulgarian National Society in the Banat , also headed by Telbisz , was established in 1939 .

Bulgaria and Yugoslavia improved their relations in the 1930s , leading to indirect recognition of the Banat Bulgarian minority by the Yugoslav government . Still , the Banat Bulgarian revival was much less perceivable in the Serbian Banat . The Banat Bulgarian population in Yugoslavia was only partially affected by the work of Telbizov , Lebanov , and the other cultural workers in the Romanian Banat .

= = = Emigration to Hungary , the United States and Bulgaria = = =

Some Banat Bulgarians migrated again , mainly to Hungary and the United States . According to Bulgarian data from 1942 , 10 @, @ 000 Banat Bulgarians lived in Hungary , mainly in the major cities , but this number is most likely overestimated . Members of the Banat Bulgarian community in Hungary include several deputies to the National Assembly , such as Petar Dobroslav , whose son László Dobroslav (László Bolgár) was a diplomat , and Georgi Vel?ov .

During the Interwar period , the Banat Bulgarian communities in Romania were among those experiencing the greatest emigration to the USA , particularly in the 1920s and 1930s . An organized Bulgarian community was established in Lone Wolf , Oklahoma , where the Banat Bulgarians were mostly farmers .

A significant number of Banat Bulgarians returned to Bulgaria , beginning in the 1880s and 1890s . They founded several villages in Pleven Province , Vratsa Province and Veliko Tarnovo Province and received privileges , as per the law of 1880 , for the settlement of unpopulated lands . They introduced superior agricultural technologies to the country and fully applied their farming experience . Their religious life was partly determined by the clashes between the dominant Eastern Orthodoxy and the minority Catholicism , and cultural conflicts with other Roman Catholic communities which they lived with in several villages , such as the Banat Swabians and the Bulgarian Paulicians from Ilfov .

= = = World War II and later = = =

On the eve of World War II , the authoritarian regime of Carol II of Romania and the fascist government under Ion Antonescu widely discriminated against the Bulgarian minority in the Romanian Banat . Bulgarians were often deprived of property and land , subjected to anti @-@ Bulgarian propaganda , and their villages had to shelter Romanian and Aromanian refugees from Northern Transylvania and Southern Dobruja .

In May 1941 , the Bulgarians in the Romanian Banat contributed to the release of ethnic Bulgarian prisoners of war from the Yugoslav Army , captured by the Axis , from a camp near Timi?oara . Communicating with the Bulgarian state , Banat Bulgarian leaders headed by Anton Lebanov negotiated the prisoners ' release and transportation to Bulgaria , after the example of the release of captured Hungarian soldiers from the Yugoslav Army . They temporarily accommodated these Bulgarians from Vardar Macedonia and the Serbian Banat and provided them with food until they could be taken to Bulgaria .

The Serbian Banat was conquered by Nazi Germany on 12 April 1941 , and was occupied for much of the war . In late 1942 , the German authorities allowed Bulgarian minority classes to be created in the Serbian schools in Ivanovo , Skorenovac , Konak , Belo Blato , and Ja?a Tomi? . However , the sudden change in the war and German withdrawal from the Banat forced education in Bulgarian to be discontinued after the 1943 ? 44 school year .

After the war , Banat Bulgarians in Romania and Yugoslavia were ruled by communist regimes . In the Romanian Banat , some were deported in the B?r?gan deportations in 1951 , but most of those were allowed to return in 1956 ? 57 . A Bulgarian school was founded in Dude?tii Vechi in 1948 , and in Vinga in 1949 . Others followed in Bre?tea , Colonia Bulgar? , and Denta , but these were

briefly closed or united with the Romanian schools after 1952 , and Bulgarian remained an optional subject .

The Constitution of Romania of 1991 allowed Bulgarians in the Romanian Banat parliamentary representation through the minority party of the Bulgarian Union of the Banat ? Romania (Balgarskoto društvo u Banát ? Rumanija) , led formerly by Karol @-@ Matej Iván?ov and as of 2008 by Nikola Mirkovi? , and Bulgarian remained an optional subject in the schools .

In post @-@ war Yugoslavia , the existence of a Banat Bulgarian minority was formally recognized , but they were not given the same rights as the larger Bulgarian minority in eastern Serbia . Unlike other minorities in Vojvodina , they were not allowed education in their mother tongue , only Serbo @-@ Croatian .

= = Language = =

The vernacular of the Bulgarians of Banat can be classified as a Paulician dialect of the Eastern Bulgarian group . A typical feature is the " ? " (* y) vowel , which can either take an etymological place or replace " i " . Other characteristic phonological features are the " ê " (wide " e ") reflex of the Old Church Slavonic yat and the reduction of " o " into " u " and sometimes " e " into " i " : puljé instead of pole (" field ") , sélu instead of selo (" village ") , ugni?ti instead of ogni?te (" fireplace ") . Another characteristic feature is the palatalization of final consonants , which is typical for other Slavic languages , but found only in non @-@ standard dialects in Bulgarian (Bulgarian den (" day ") sounds like and is written as denj) .

Lexically , the language has borrowed many words from languages such as German (such as drot from Draht , " wire " ; gáng from Gang , " anteroom , corridor ") , Hungarian (vilánj from villany , " electricity " ; mozi , " cinema ") , Serbo @-@ Croatian (stvár from stvar , " item , matter " ; rá?un from ra?un , " account ") , and Romanian (?edinca from ?edin?? , " conference ") due to the close contacts with the other peoples of the multiethnic Banat and the religious ties with other Roman Catholic peoples . Banat Bulgarian also has some older loanwords from Ottoman Turkish and Greek , which it shares with other Bulgarian dialects (e.g. hirgjen from Turkish ergen , " unmarried man , bachelor " ; trandáfer from Greek ?????????????? triantafyllo , " rose ") . Loanwords constitute around 20 % of the Banat Bulgarian vocabulary . The names of some Banat Bulgarians are also influenced by Hungarian names , as the Hungarian (eastern) name order is sometimes used (family name followed by given name) and the female ending " -a " is often dropped from family names . Thus , Marija Vel?ova would become Vel?ov Marija .

Besides loanwords , the lexis of Banat Bulgarian has also acquired calques and neologisms , such as svetica (" icon " , formerly used ikona and influenced by German Heiligenbild) , zarno (" bullet " , from the word meaning " grain ") , oganbalvá? (" volcano " , literally " fire belcher ") , and predhurta (" foreword ") .

The Banat Bulgarian language uses its own script , largely based on the Croatian version of the Latin alphabet (Gaj 's Latin Alphabet) , and preserves many features that are archaic in the language spoken in Bulgaria . The language was codified as early as 1866 and is used in literature and press , which distinguishes it from plain dialects .

= = = Alphabet = = =

The following is the Banat Bulgarian Latin alphabet :

= = = Examples = = =

= = Culture = =

Banat Bulgarians have engaged in literary activity since they settled in the Banat . Their earliest preserved literary work is the historical record Historia Domus (Historia Parochiae Oppidi Ó @-@

Bessenjö , in Diocesi Czanadiensi , Comitatu Torontalensi) , written in Latin in the 1740s . The codification of the Banat Bulgarian vernacular in 1866 enabled the release of a number of school books and the translation of several important religious works in the mid @-@ 19th century . There was a literary revival in the 1930s , centred around the Banats?i balgars?i glasni? newspaper . Today , the Bulgarian Union of the Banat ? Romania issues the biweekly newspaper Ná?a glás and the monthly magazine Literaturna miselj .

The music of the Banat Bulgarians is classed as a separate branch of Bulgarian folk music , with several verbal and musical peculiarities . While the typically Bulgarian bars have been preserved , a number of melodies display Romanian , Serbian , and Hungarian influences , and the specific Bulgarian Christmas carols have been superseded by urban @-@ type songs . Roman Catholicism has exerted considerable influence , eliminating certain types of songs and replacing them with others . Similarly , Banat Bulgarians have preserved many Bulgarian holidays but also adopted others from other Roman Catholic peoples . One of the most popular holidays is Far?ángji , or the Carnival . In terms of dances , Banat Bulgarians have also heavily borrowed from the neighbouring peoples , for example Hungarian csárdás .

The women 's national costume of the Banat Bulgarians has two varieties . The costume of Vinga is reminiscent of those of sub @-@ Balkan cities in Bulgaria ; the one of Stár Bi?nov is characteristic of northwestern Bulgaria . The Vinga costume has been particularly influenced by the dress of Hungarians and Germans , but the Stár Bi?nov costume has remained more conservative . The Banat Bulgarian women 's costume is perceived as particularly impressive with its crown @-@ like headdress .

= = Notable figures = =

Colonel Stefan Dunjov (1815 ? 1889) ? revolutionary , participant in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 , and member of Giuseppe Garibaldi 's forces during the Italian unification

Eusebius Fermend?in (1845 ? 1897) ? historian , high @-@ ranking Franciscan cleric , theologian , polyglot , and active member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts

Leopold Kossilkov (1850 ? 1940) ? teacher and writer

Jozu Rill ? 19th @-@ century teacher and internationally acclaimed textbook writer ; codified the Banat Bulgarian orthography and grammar in 1866

Carol Telbisz (1853 ? 1914) ? long @-@ time mayor of Timi?oara (1885 ? 1914)

Anton Lebanov (1912 ? 2008) ? lawyer , journalist , and poet

Karol Telbizov (1915 ? 1994) ? lawyer , journalist , and scientist

Luis Bacalov (b . 1933) ? Academy Award @-@ winning Argentine composer