

“Notes and Studies of Prespa in the Branislav Rusić Archives at the Macedonian Academy of
Sciences and the Arts”

Branislav Rusić was a member of the first post-war generation of Macedonian ethnographers who set the groundwork for ethnographic studies of Macedonia. His family originated from the village of German in Lower Prespa, now in Aegean Macedonia. He was born in the village of Tomino in the Poreč region, he received his primary and secondary education in Prilep, Kruševac and in Bitola, and in 1937 received a degree in ethnography from Belgrade University. He received his doctorate from Zagreb University in 1951. From 1939 to 1946 he worked at the State Archives and at the Ethnographic museum in Belgrade. In 1946 he moved to the newly established university in Skopje, where he formed a group on Ethnology, which he lead until 1958. From 1958 to the end of his life in 1971 he was a professor of Ethnography in the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. He was concurrently in charge of the division on folk costumes at the Folklore Institute in Skopje.

Rusić's greatest contribution to the ethnographic study of Macedonia is undoubtedly his extensive field research of every part of the country, either alone early in his career, or on field studies with his students in later years. He began his field research as a student in 1934 as a student at Belgrade University. There is hardly a village in Macedonia that escaped a study by Rusić, though his most voluminous studies were concentrated mostly in the regions of Poreč, Železnik, Debarce, Struga, Ohrid, Prespa, Slavište, Pijanec, Delčevo, Osogovia and Capari. He studied and collected research materials on every aspect of everyday life, on the last of the Macedonian gusle players, on agricultural tools, on rituals associated with the re-burying of the

deceased, customs associated with agriculture, on family relationships, on family names, just to name a few.

The Branislav Rusiќ archive at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and the Arts in Skopje consists of around 400 archival items stored in 23 boxes, totaling over ten thousand pages¹. The archive materials are organized and grouped according to a cataloguing system internal to MANU:

1. Personal and bibliographic documents
2. Materials from his scholarly work.
 - Published and unpublished manuscripts
 - Material from his field research (organized thematically and by region)
 - Public lectures, congresses, group travels with students
 - His activities as a professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and at the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Skopje, and his cooperative research at other institution.
3. Manuscripts authored by other individuals, such as doctoral dissertations, course papers, seminar papers and others.
4. Correspondences with family members and other individuals.
5. Other materials
 - Audio tapes
 - Moving pictures, film negatives, and glass negatives.
 - Photographs with ethnographic character and from his private life
 - Postcards
 - Drawings

¹ For an extensive description of the Rusiќ archive at MANU see Љупчо Ристевски. Ракописната заоставштина на Бранислав Русиќ. Битола Мисирков, 1997.

- Ethnographic map of Macedonia
- Articles from newspapers
- Other printed materials

6. Family documents

7. Other materials of non-ethnographic character.

The largest, and by far the most significant part of the archive consists of Rusiќ's field notes and other document related to his scholarly research. An important addition to these resources are the numerous seminar papers written by his student, which Rusiќ used as sources for his own research.

Rusiќ's interest in the ethnography of the Prespa region began as a young student at Belgrade University, no doubt influenced by the fact that his own family was from the same area. After the war he continued field research of the Prespa region in 1947/48 as professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, when he covered all of the villages in Upper and Lower Prespa. In 1950 and 1951 he makes several more visits to the region, and collects additional field data on a number of villages. Parallel with this field research Rusiќ studied the relevant literature on Prespa and compiled an extensive bibliography on the history and ethnography of the region.

Rusiќ's first major work that focuses specifically on the Prespa region is his 148 page manuscript titled "Доњи Дупени: Етнолошке белешке из живота и обичаји једног насеља у доњој Преспи," which he wrote in 1934 for a Sveti Sava competition at Belgrade University. This manuscript sets the standard for the methodology that Rusiќ will use in field research that he later will conduct in other regions all over Macedonia. Here he discusses the oral history of the village, the names and historical origins of all the families, the names, ages and physical characteristics of his informants. He provides detailed descriptions of typical houses and

household items, and includes numerous architectural drawings, including the local names for parts of architectural units. For example, we learn the local names of each of the pieces of lumber used in constructing a roof or a barn. He is most meticulous in describing the local farming, social and religious rituals and practices. We learn of the state of the local economy at the time, the crops that the people farmed, the types of farming equipment and implements that they used. In the area of animal husbandry, we learn which types of animals can be found in the village, as well as their numbers and the names of their owners. Of particular interest to linguists is that all names of farm implements and household items are given in the local dialect with a properly marked accent. This manuscript is also a rich compendium of local folklore, including popular beliefs, folk medicines, myths, folk music, children's games, as well as birth, wedding and death rituals.

Rusić's field notebooks are by far the most valuable resource in the archive. Rusić filled these notebooks with detailed and meticulously organized notes. The language of the notebooks is almost exclusively Serbian, with the exception of local names for objects and quotations from local speech. The author's handwriting is not very legible, the notes were written with light pencil and ink, which makes it quite difficult to read them. These initial field notes were written "in the field" as Rusić visited each village, so that they lack any systematic organization. Later he organized these notes in separate notebooks by subject covering 30 villages in Prespa, and always starting with the village of Konjsko in the west and ending with Dolno Dupeni in the east. Rusić used some of these notes for several short publications in newspapers and in the Enciklopedija Jugoslavije, but the great majority of them have yet to be published or studied extensively.

Another important set of manuscripts in the Rusiќ archives are the seminar papers and theses written by his students on a variety of ethnographic subjects. Rusiќ would often assign a topic for a paper, such as the study of folk costumes, and would require students to gather data on the same subject from many locations in Macedonia. Although these papers are quite short, they were good training exercises for the new generation of Macedonian ethnographers, at a time when there was no tradition of systematic gathering and analysis of ethnographic data. They are also valuable resources for comparative studies of ethnographic regions in Macedonia. Many of these seminar papers were written in the late forties and fifties, when the Macedonian literary language was going through a process of standardization. The language of the authors of these papers reflects the state of the literary language of that period, which can be a subject of analysis for linguists.

The Rusiќ archive is also especially rich in photographic materials and film negatives. The content of the film negatives is of mostly ethnographic character, and it consists of approximately 1,100 individual exposures. One box contains several hundred photographs from field trips and scholarly conferences. A major drawback to using the photographs and film negatives for research is that they are not catalogued systematically. The location of the image is indicated on the reverse side of each, and they are organized in small boxes and envelopes by region only. Perhaps Rusiќ maintained a detailed catalogue of these images, but nothing of the sort can be found in the archive itself. The contents of the images reflect the focus of Rusiќ's ethnographic field research: people dressed in local folk costumes, holiday celebrations and other folk rituals, panoramic views of villages, dwellings, and farm implements.

From around 1950 Rusiќ began using a tape recorder in his field work, and the tapes in the archive contain recordings covering the gamut of ethnographic details, including weddings,

folk proverbs, songs, stories, interviews, etc. These tapes, already over 50 years old, are in very poor condition and have never been transcribed.

Manuscript number AE62/1-51, “Народни обичаи у Охридској котлини и у Преспи” (Folk customs in the Ohrid valley and in Prespa) is one of Rusík’s earliest manuscripts covering the Prespa region. The manuscript is typewritten in Serbian. Here Rusík focuses on a comparative study of similarities between the language and traditions in the Ohrid region and in Prespa, which he attributes to migrations from nearby villages in Ohrid to Prespa. He notes linguistic differences between Upper and Lower Prespa, specifically the results of the Old Slavic nasal vowels. The manuscript also notes similarities between the two regions associated with birth rituals. We learn that both in Ohrid and in Prespa, on the third day after the birth of a child a group of three old women bring the child sex appropriate toys: a mirror and a set of knitting needles for a girl, and an ax and planer for a boy.

The manuscript also provides detailed descriptions of the wedding rituals: the arrival of the wedding party at the bride’s house, the lyrics of the songs that are sung to the groom and to the “dever”, and songs that are sung to the bride as she leaves her parents’ house. When the bride arrives at the grooms house, she is first greeted by her mother-in-law. The wedding party burns the mother-in-law’s scarf, and the bride gives her a new one. The wedding guests pour water under the mother-in-law, announcing that “she has pissed from being so happy” with her daughter-in-law.

Among the death rituals in Prespa, Rusík notes that they put coins in the dead person’s mouth and in a pocket, to be used as spending money by the deceased as he enters the other world. People in the village who have someone deceased recently bring an apple with a coin stuck in it for the dead person to give to their relative in the other world. On St. Trifun’s (also

known as the drunkard) day people go to their vineyards bringing with them food and wine. They cut three branches from a vine and bury an egg somewhere in the middle of the vineyard so that there won't be any damaging hail during the season. This section also describes religious rituals associated with Zadušnica, Pokladi, Lazara, Cvetnici, Velivden, Gjurgjovdan, and it includes the lyrics of numerous songs sung for those occasions. On Gjurgjovdan young men swing girls on swings while singing "swinging" songs to them. This subject held particular interest for Rusiќ. The archive contains several other manuscripts on this subject based on research in other parts of Macedonia. On Eremija day young girls go to the mountain to collect medicinal herbs as they sing songs appropriate for that occasion. The holiday Ivanden, celebrated at a monastery near the village of Ezerani, is the time of year when young men and women meet to select their future partners.

Harvest songs in Macedonian folklore are quite widespread, and Rusiќ records the lyrics of a series of such songs that are sung on the way to the fields, at noon, and at the end of the day on the way home. Rusiќ notes that that people from Prespa are great lovers of songs and dances. They sing on every occasion. He lists the names of the most common musical instruments in Prespa and the titles of the most popular song and dances of the time. The "gajda" was the most popular instrument in Jankovec, and villagers say that on holidays there were gajdas playing in four different places in the village.

In this manuscript Rusic also focuses on a comparison of folk costumes in Upper and Lower Prespa. His descriptions include the local names for each individual part of a costume. He notes that traditional men's costumes are rarely seen in villages. He also notes that women's costumes are very simple, not very appealing, and that black is the primary color. Men's

costumes in Lower Prespa are similar to the older costumes in Upper Prespa, while women's costumes are much more colorful in Lower than in Upper Prespa.

The most extensive ethnographic descriptions of Prespa in the Rusiák archive are found in manuscripts AE86 I-IV. Manuscript AE86 I, written in Serbian, consists of 300 pages of notes from field research conducted in 1949. The notes are organized by subject and they covers over 30 villages. The author describes, in the same order for every village, the architecture of the dwellings, household items and agricultural implements, the agriculture, transportation, education, the Ilinden period in the history of the village, antiquities, holiday and other celebrations, folk beliefs, the local speech, and the costumes. He provides a general description of the materials used in building the houses, the background and origin of the people who constructed the houses, and the names and descriptions of each of the rooms in a house. Many of these descriptions are accompanied by detailed drawings, including the names for the individual parts.

In descriptions of weather conditions, he notes the local names for winds (depending on the direction), and the type of weather that each wind may bring: rain, snow, frost, dry conditions, etc. The description of the geography and natural surroundings include the exact location of the village and the location of nearby forests, fields, rivers, etc. We also learn of the road conditions in the village, the means of travel, the names of the individuals who provided transportation, and the cost of transportation to various locations, motly to Bitola, Ohrid, and Korča (in Albania). His descriptions of the educational conditions include the number of students, the names of teachers and often the history of the school. We learn for example that the village of Jankovec earlier had Bulgarian, Greek, and a Serbian schools.

The period of the Ilinden uprising is one of the most formative periods in Macedonian history, and during the time of Rusiќ's field studies he was successful in locating and interviewing some villagers who still had a memory of the events, or at least had heard stories from older relatives about the uprising. Rusiќ records the events that took place in each village during this period, including the names of the people who participated in the uprising and the manner in which Ilinden celebrations were conducted in the village. From the oral history of the villagers Rusiќ also constructs the past history of the village, including descriptions and the history of objects built in antiquity. As is the case in all of his other field notes, for each village Rusiќ includes the names, ages, background and physical characteristics of his informants

In a separate section on the local speech, Rusiќ notes for each village numerous examples of what he considers to be unique linguistic features and constructions. Rusiќ simply listed the words and phrases without any commentaries. Below are some examples.

Стење:

Стенханец, стенчани, Концко, концкарец, концкари, двопати, Богарија,
грејт, „ен сој сме, деленици“, „и на мал'оово ќе му текнит“,
„му реков Коруну“, „ке му текнит Мицету“, „ејзеро“-језеро, „(j)и дојсле“,
„лескоска црква“ – село Лесковец, стис

Лескоец:

Веливден, сажди, брајка и браќа, „ми карат, ма бијат“

Волкодери:

арменик (рвеник), Шурлежани (Шурленци)

Прељубје:

крл'ук.

Перово:

„вода Лашечка“ (Лавци), „Му дадов Милану“

Царев Двор:

прецемник (<претсемник <предсебник)

Златари:

„му пишит“, шемше, „му дадоа Костету нивје“

Кривени:

„кај та викат?“

Љорека:

затсонце, угрејсонце („од _____ ветар дујеше“)

Долна Бела Црква:

„старосва њиуба“

Слимница:

маме (имаме), сееше=седеше, напраимеф,

Арвати:

церео, цереа, „ши ојдоа“

Крани:

„фатвае риби со мрежда“

Љубојно

„а зедоф“, ке зевамеф“, „а карамеф“, „не са штука“, „сите одака са“, „ни(ј)е

учени сне“, пролетос, летос, есенос, „со то село беше“, „во зедоа=го зедоа“,

внотре, јоглен, авјар=ајвар

Кажва кажваме

Кажваш кажвате

Кажва кажве

Пиша пишиме

Пишиш пишите

Пиши пише

Дупени

„неините деци“, „неколку днови“, „и писамеф мајки“, „му (в)о дадов Јанку“,
„го имале зевено, купено“

For many of the villages Rusiќ also provides the local names for the months, parts of the body and the parts of vehicles and of plowing instruments.

CONCLUSION

List of items on Prespa in the Branislav Rusiќ archive at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and the Arts.²

AE62/ 1-51 “Народни обичаи у Охридској котлини и у Преспи” (Folk customs in the Ohrid valley and in Prespa).

AE85/1, 1-146+2 “Доњи Дупени: Етнолошке белешке из живота и обичаја једног насеља у доњој Преспи”. (Donji Dupeni: Ethnographic notes from the life and customs of a village in lower Prespa).
Submitted for a competition at Belgrade University, 1934.

² The complete manuscripts on Prespa can be accessed online at this URL:
<http://www.auburn.edu/forlang/macedonia/MANU/Rusic/index.html>

- AE85/2, 1-168 “Село Долно Дупени”. First version of the manuscript “Доњи Дупени: Етнолошке белешке из живота и обичаја једног насеља у доњој Преспи”, 1934.
- AE86/I, 1-300 “Преспа”. Field notes organized by subject for more than 30 villages in the Prespa region. Descriptions of houses and household items, agriculture, transportation, education, history of the Ilinden period, antiquities and oral history, holiday and other customs, folk beliefs, language, folk costumes, etc.
- AE/IIa, 1-66 Notebook with ethnographic field notes from the Prespa region from field research conducted in 1949 in the villages Stenje, Konjsko, Leskoec, Shurlenci, Volkoderi, Pokrvenik, Perovo and Drmeni.
- AE/IIб, 1-81 Notebook with ethnographic field notes from the Prespa region from field research conducted in 1949 in the villages Zlatari, Sopotsko, Kriveni, Krushje, Ilino, Izbishta, Jankovec, Bolno, Petrino, Evla, Gorno Dupeni and Stipona.
- AE/IIв, 1-76 Notebook with ethnographic field notes from the Prespa region from field research conducted in 1949 in the villages Ezereni, Dolna Bela Crkva, Kozjak, Podmochani, Grnchari, Rajca, Asamati, Kurbinovo, Pretor, Slivnica, Krani and Shtrbovo.
- AE/IIг, 1-132 Notebook with ethnographic field notes from the Prespa region from field research conducted in 1949 in the villages Ljubojno, Brajchino, Nakolec and Dolno Dupeni.

AE/IIд, 1-40	Notebook with ethnographic field notes from field research conducted in 1949 in the village of Podmochani.
AE/IIIг, 1-40	Notebook with ethnographic field notes from the Prespa region from field research conducted in 1950 in the villages Ljubojno, Brajchino and Dolno Dupeni.
AE/IIе, 1-42	Notebook with ethnographic field notes from field research conducted in 1950 in Resen and Ljubojno.
AE/IIж, 1-42	Notebook with ethnographic field notes from field research conducted in 1950 and 1951 in Resen and Dupeni.
AE/III, 2-3	A letter sent to Branislav Rusiќ from Aco Filip from Resen, in which he informs him that he is attaching a copy of his father's diary. Dated September 15, 1951.
AE/III, 2-3	“Гончаровци и наша фамилија” (Goncharovci and our family). Copy of the diary of the father of Aco Filip from Resen.
AE/III, 4	Hand drawn map of Resen.
AE/IV, 1-108	Bibliographic notes on Prespa.
AE105/135-139	Ethnographic notes on the “yoke” and some holiday customs from research conducted by various individuals, including Branislav Rusiќ.
AE143/II	Articles by Branislav Rusiќ written for “Enciklopedija Jugoslavije”. Oteshevo: p. 83, Resen: p. 109.
Seminar Papers by students of Branislav Rusiќ	
AE165, 1-46	Драгица Слијепчевиќ. “Исхрана у Преспи”, 1955.

- AE166, 1-21 Т. Груев. “Народна исхрана во југозападна Преспа”. Initial research in the villages Konjsko, Stenje, Lekovec, Oteshevo, Shurlenci, Volkoderi, Preljubje, Dolno Perovo and Gorno Perovo, 1949.
- AE168, 1-16 Ристо Кузмановски. “Одредување меѓи и земјоделски работи и обичаи околу тоа во село Кривени, Горна Преспа.” 1956.
- AE191, 1-9 Петра Гоцкова. “Земјоделски алати во Горна Преспа.” 1949.
- AE195, 1-25 Марица Наумова. “Куќата во Горна Преспа.” Includes a map, two photographs and six architectural drawings. 1949.
- AE197, 1-8 Милица Огнанова. “Покуќнината во Горна Преспа”. Includes drawing of wooden household items.
- AE205, 1-16 Васил Граматиковски. “Обичаи околу раѓање, смрт, Ѓурѓовден и Иванден во Љубојно.” 1958.
- AE211, 1-16 Драги Ставревски. “Свадбени обичаи во село Курбиново.” 1959.
- AE212, 1-12 В. Лубаровски. “Свадбени обичаи во село Љубојно.” 1955.
- AE219, 1-22 Трајан Пецалевски. “Празнични обичаи во село Сопотско, Горна Преспа.” 1955.
- AE220, 1-10 Вера Симончева. “Верски обичаи во врска со празниците во Преспа.” 1949.
- AE249, 1-18 Елена Цандарева. “Народната носија во селата Туминец и Глобочани на Преспанското Езеро.” 1962.

AE250, 1-18	Славко Белевски. “Обичаите и носијата во село Сливница на Преспанското Езеро.”
AE252, 1-12	Аница Антова. “Народна носија во Горна Преспа.” 1949. Includes 2 photographs and 4 drawings of costumes.
AE257, 1-4	Галаба Паликрушева. “Везови во Горна Преспа.” 1949.
AE269, 1-18	Лепа Глигориева. “Народни песни од Преспа.” Lyrics for thirty-three songs. 1949.
AE291, 1-37	Film negative with 37 images from Prespa.
AE292, 1-30	Film negative with 30 images from Prespa and Malesija.
AE293, 1-38	Film negative with 38 images from Prespa, Malesija and Debarca.
AE295, 1-36	Film negative with 36 images from the Struga region and Prespa.
AE303, 1-36	Film negative with 36 images from Prespa, Capari and the village of Zhegljane in Kumanovo.
AE316, 1-4	Film negative with 4 images from Oteshevo.
AE374, 1	Glass negative with an image from the church in Ljubojno.
AE374, 2	Glass negative with an image from the village of German on Lake Prespa.
AE374, 3	Glass negative with an image from the village of Konjsko on Lake Prespa.
AE342, 1-48	Photographs (48) from the Struga region and Prespa. Women’s and men’s costumes, houses and panoramic views.
AE343, 1-41	Photographs (41) from Prespa. Wedding, costumes, houses and panoramic views.