

THE LEGACY OF VATROSLAV OBLAK'S *MACEDONISCHE STUDIEN* IN MACEDONIAN STUDIES

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1.0 Introduction

The goal of this paper is to outline in general terms the legacy and influence of Vatroslav Oblak's monograph *Macedonische Studien* on the field of Macedonian studies.¹ I will endeavor to show that Oblak's study retains its value as original and important dialectological research, and that it also serves a historical function, inasmuch as it describes several Macedonian dialects in the waning years of their nearly millennium and a half of existence, in addition to describing the political, ethnographic and cultural situation in the south-eastern Macedonian region. A period of tremendous upheavals in this region was destined to begin just two decades after Oblak's fieldwork in Macedonia, beginning with the second Balkan war in 1913, which witnessed the forced exodus of a large segment of the Slavic population. Oblak's colorful description and commentary on the city and people of Thessaloniki (Saloniki) and the problems he encountered in his fieldwork at the hands of the Turkish authorities and with his own informants provide rare glimpses of this part of the Balkans at the time from the perspective of a Slovene intellectual.

2.0 Oblak's fieldwork

The circumstances of Vatroslav Oblak's fieldwork in Macedonia are well known: using funds he was awarded by the University of Vienna, Oblak traveled to Saloniki in the late fall of 1891 with an ambitious plan of fieldwork (Murko 11). He was undoubtedly following his mentor Vatroslav Jagić's advice and counsel in the planning of his trip: Jagić, according to Oblak, expressed a desire to undertake a conscientious study of the Macedonian dialects in Macedonia, since most of the texts collected in this area had been to

¹ I wish to thank Rado Lencek for his commitment and dedication to this subject.

varying degrees corrupted by the field workers themselves: the collector's dialect influenced the recording of texts or the texts were influenced by the written language (e.g., Bulgarian) (Oblak 2). A major problem lay in the orthography of the published texts (most often folk songs): individual sounds were not recorded precisely, uniformly or according to the standard representation used by linguists of the time. Such inadequacies were to be expected since the collectors were often teachers, priests and merchants. As a recent graduate and Jagić's student, Oblak was well trained and capable of producing a detailed study that would take into account all of the characteristics of an individual Macedonian dialect (Oblak 2). Aside from existing inaccuracies, the fundamental inspiration for the research was the special position that the Macedonian dialects occupied in Slavic philology, from Dobrovský forward, since Macedonia was the homeland of the "apostles to the Slavs," Saints Cyril and Methodius, and of Old Church Slavonic.

From distant Vienna Oblak planned an arduous journey with the intention of visiting the whole of Macedonia, from Debar in the northwest to Bitola and Kostur in the west, through Strumica and Dojran, east to Serres, Drama, Nevrokop and even Mt. Athos. The distance from Saloniki to Debar through remote, mountainous terrain was daunting and would have to be done entirely on horse, foot or in an occasional buggy. This would be difficult for the healthiest of shepherds, but given Oblak's questionable health—he suffered from tuberculosis from birth—such a trip would have been extremely taxing. Since he was quite aware of the dangers and challenges of traveling in the region, the fact that he planned such fieldwork indicates Oblak's ambition and courage. While still in Vienna, he was warned by others who had worked in the region (e.g., Stojan Novaković):

More than anything, you will be greeted by suspicion everywhere which will make your job difficult, especially in places where there is no consul or local authorities. In those places you will find a real medieval wilderness, weighted down by all sorts of pseudo-politics and the refinement of ruse which has developed in the maelstrom of violence, disorder and every type of bribery of countless propagandists. In that respect you will see that there isn't an unluckier land in the world than Macedonia. There are people from all sides in Thessaloniki,

but for you, a person who comes there especially to investigate the language, it will be most difficult to find exactly the one you need and to come in contact with him (Hamm 76).

Oblak was also warned of the difficulties of carrying out fieldwork in Macedonia by his mentor Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, who wrote from Dorpat on 8 June 1891,

Jaz sem bival mej civiliziranimi Slovenci, italijanskimi Slovani in Litavci, Vi pa grete mej poludivje Makedonce. Predvsim prizadevajte se biti z ljudmi popolnoma prosto (ganz einfach) in jih v nobenem obziru ne ženirati (ne obmejati) (nicht geniren) (Russian: ne stesnjat'sja) (Lencek 351).

Oblak's program, then, was from the outset unrealistic in its ambitious scope, but only after arriving in Saloniki and experiencing the difficulties of life and of arranging necessary documents and security for fieldwork did he accept the conclusion that it was well-nigh impossible and decide to remain in Saloniki. Likewise, he was warned against the trip by other Europeans in Saloniki. Oblak related to Jagić already on 21 November that the Russian consul Jasterbov had traveled to the Debar region and despite being escorted by a *hajduk* guide, had nearly been killed (Oblak 129). Another hint of the difficulties that lay ahead is found in Oblak's letter to Jagić two weeks later, in which he related that he had been warned that it would be best not to take written notes in the presence of informants so as not to be taken for a spy (Oblak 137). He was also told to delay his trip to Mt. Athos until after the Lenten fasts on account of the scarcity of food on the Holy Mountain before Easter (Oblak 136). By early March 1892, understandably frustrated and impatient, Oblak managed a single, brief field trip to the lower Vardar river region, but it was on this, his first visit outside of Saloniki that he was arrested by the Turkish police and subsequently counseled by the Austrian ambassador to leave Macedonia before his research goals had been achieved.

3.0 The linguistic legacy of Oblak's text

A consideration of Oblak's legacy in relation to the field of Macedonian studies begins with an accounting of the influence of *Macedonische Studien* on Macedonian dialectology. Oblak spent a little over three and a half months in Saloniki. During this period he became

acquainted with three dialects: 1) the Suho dialect, 2) the Debar dialect from the villages of Galičnik, Klene and Oboki and 3) the lower Vardar dialect group (dolnovardarski govori) from the villages of Novo Selo, Grdabor, Bugarievo, Vatilak and Vardarovci. In light of the fact that his ambitious expeditions into the field failed to materialize, the choice of dialects was, it seems, determined by his informants, at least those who met his criteria: 1) no schooling and therefore not exposed to the Bulgarian language as taught in some areas of Macedonia; 2) not long in Saloniki and 3) previously resident only in their native areas (Oblak 129).

Oblak's description of the Suho dialect, which along with the town of Visoka, belong to the lagadinsko-bogdanski dialects, is of primary importance.² The circumstances under which he worked in the preparation of his description of this dialect were not ideal: Oblak used a single informant in his description, conducted his fieldwork in Saloniki, unable to make the journey to Suho (located approximately thirty miles northeast of Saloniki in a remote mountainous area), and finished his work in a relatively short period of time (he first mentioned his work on this dialect in a letter to Jagić on 12 December 1891, reporting to him on 24 December that his work on the dialect was at an end). Oblak was attracted to this dialect because of its archaic features, specifically the preservation of nasality.³ From his letter to Jagić, we know that Oblak had with him Draganov's *Abhandlung über den Nasalismus in den macedonischen Dialekten* (Oblak 133). The feature of nasality in the bogdansko dialect was, according to Ljubomir Miletić, first noted in 1860 by the Slovak Slavist Martin Hattala.⁴

Oblak provided a systematic description of the preservation of nasal vowels in *Macedonische Studien* (18–21). The old nasals developed into a vocalic element with a following /m/ or /n/. In accented positions, the back nasal /ɔ/ became /'m/, /'n/, with the vocalic

² Suhó (Greek Σωχος) and Visóka (Οσσα).

³ It is known that the Suho dialect was among the most archaic in Macedonia, exhibiting traces of nasality and the preservation of the phonetic value of jat'.

⁴ In 1865, Hattala wrote on nasal sounds in Bulgarian from information on Visoka based on a document describing the place written in the local dialect, printed in the Constantinople paper *S'vetnik* in 1857, with such forms as *glenda*, *enzik'*, etc. (Miletić 12).

element further being completely absorbed by the following sonant (*zmp, rnka, pnt*), while in unaccented positions the vocalic element developed into /a/ (*glambók, gólambi*). The front nasal became /em/, /en/, /'m/, /'n/ in accented syllables as well as the vocalic element becoming completely absorbed by the following sonant (*péntok, réndovi, znt*). In unaccented positions the vocalic element developed into /i/ or was wholly absorbed (*pinta, kucnta*). Oblak claimed that such nasals are not found in Bulgarian and likened them to the situation in Polish and the Slovene *gajtalerski* dialect (18).

Besides providing a systematic description of the preservation of nasal vowels in *Macedonische Studien*, Oblak also noted for the first time that the reflex of the front nasal coincided with the reflex of jat' (20–21). As a reflex of the front nasal... “appeared /'ä/ and with the loss of softness of the preceding consonant /ä/ so that the reflex of the nasal ę in such examples corresponds with the jat'. Besides this, /a/ appeared as a later development of /'ä/, /ä/.”⁵ Oblak gives the following examples of this development: *mäsu, mä, tä, sä, imä* and *mačkam, sa*. In addition, he states that nasality is probably also preserved in the villages surrounding Suho, i.e., Visoka and Zarovo, based on the informant from Suho. Here Oblak would seem to be providing direction for later studies.

Oblak's notes influenced Zbigniew Gołąb, who, using material provided by Oblak and Małeckı, further demonstrated the parallel development of jat' and the front nasal, e.g., v'äk//v'äkót = vek, gór'ä < *gorě, m'äsóto, pl. suffix -'ä'nta // -'anta < ęta, e.g., jágnanta (Suho), neut. suffix -'a < -*ę, e.g., vr'am'a, jágn'a, pil'a, acc. sg. of pers. pron., m'ä, t'ä// t'a < me, te (Gołąb 218). A feature specific to the Suho dialect is the reflex /'ä/ and /'ä -'äm/ for the front nasal /ę/ (Vidoeski 48). Suho and Visoka along with Zarovo and Balevec were the only ones in this group to maintain the phoneme /ä/, e.g., jat', b'ägam, b'äl, b'äsin (Vidoeski 48).

⁵ Oblak wrote: Ab [Altbulgarisch] Λ wurde nach Verlust der nasalen Resonanz zu ę, das sich in unbetonten Silben wie ein jedes ę zu ĭ entwickelte. Daneben erscheint auch 'ä und mit Verlust der Weicheit der vorausgehenden Consonanten ä, so das der Reflex des Λ in solchen Beispielen mit Ǿ zusammenfiel. Ausserdem noch a als eine weiterentwicklung des 'ä, ä. Ein dem Reflex des Λ entsprechender Unterschied zwischen inlautenden und Schlussilben ist beim Reflex des Λ nicht vorhanden (20-21).

Macedonische Studien was the first major work on the Macedonian dialects of Aegean Macedonia and has played a significant role in many of the subsequent works in the field of Macedonian dialectology. Seliščev used Oblak's work as one of the more important sources for his 1918 work *Očerki po makedonskoj dialektologii*. Although Seliščev did his field work in the Polog region (Tetovo in 1914), he refers to Oblak often and used the latter's commentary and description. Małecki also cited Oblak in his works on the Suho and Visoka dialects and used Oblak's description of the Suho dialect as a kind of reference or check-test for his own conclusions. Małecki never completed his investigation of the Suho and Visoka dialects, finishing only the texts and the lexicon before his early death. His student Gołąb completed the last part, the grammar, only in the early 1960s. Oblak's *Macedonische Studien* figured importantly in Gołąb's work as an additional description, besides Małecki's. In some cases the forms and sounds Oblak provided differ from those of Małecki and it was Gołąb who highlighted the differences and proposed solutions. Even Oblak's description of the Suho dialect, accomplished in two weeks on the information of a single informant, retains its value. The grammatical forms and lexemes found in *Macedonische Studien* will continue to be used by dialectologists working on Macedonian. Macedonian dialectologists active in the Republic of Macedonia have paid tribute to Oblak's important contributions. Blaže Koneski credited Oblak's work with being not just a description of the given dialects but also a source of rich historical commentary, especially in the field of phonology (Koneski 7). For example, in his historical phonology of the Macedonian language Koneski used Oblak's material to illustrate how the phonemes g'/k' with distinct affrication and the palatalized plosives g'/k' can coexist in a single dialect, citing the forms proved by Oblak (*čerka*, *k'erka*) (45). In this way, Oblak's groundbreaking work complements later, perhaps more complete works; for instance, there are lexemes found in *Macedonische Studien* that are not found in Małecki's lexicon (Hamm 85). In view of the fact that the dialects have completely vanished or are in the process of disappearing, Oblak's description of the Suho and lower Vardar dialects are even more significant. In this respect Oblak is the first of a distinguished group of foreign linguists who have researched the Macedonian dialects; he was followed by Afanasij M. Seliščev, André Mazon, André Vaillant, Mieczysław Małecki, Zbigniew Gołąb, and Zuzanna Topolińska.

The present status of the Macedonian dialects in Aegean Macedonia (northern Greece) and the tremendous demographic changes in the region during this century have combined to increase the significance of *Macedonische Studien*. The second Balkan War, World War I, the mass immigration of Greek settlers from Asia Minor, the Greek civil war, as well as Greek policy towards the Macedonian Slav minority have greatly affected the demographic composition of northern Greece as well as the status of the Macedonian dialects. Some that existed in the region during Oblak's time have long since disappeared. The Bogdan dialect group (Suho, Visoka, Zarovo, and Negovan) has come under tremendous pressure. The village of Zarovo was burned by the Greek army during the second Balkan War and the Slavic population fled to Vardar and Pirin Macedonia.⁶ The lower Vardar dialects have suffered considerably more, especially in the region around the town of Kukuš, where forty Slavic villages were burned by the Greek army in 1913 (*Carnegie Report* 315). The reconstruction of the Kukuš dialect was the object of Kosta Peev's 1987 book. Peev described the dialect based on interviews with informants who fled the region during the 1913 war. He did his fieldwork in the Strumički region of the Republic of Macedonia in 1975, more than sixty years after the emigration occurred. Peev admitted the inherent difficulties of such a reconstruction: the informants themselves left the Kukuš region at around the age of ten and had lived in the Strumički region since then, making them quite old at the time of Peev's work; in addition, the refugees' speech had been corrupted and influenced by their new homes and marriages and the resulting mixing of dialects (37). Since many of the villages in the region were destroyed and never re-inhabited, the Macedonian dialects are preserved only by the refugees and the available written sources. Peev also had recourse to written sources: Kuzman Šapkarev was in Kukuš in 1865 as a folklorist and teacher and Dimitar Mirčev worked in the area, but both were influenced by their respective dialects.⁷ Here Oblak's *Macedonische*

⁶ Zarovo became the settlement Nikopolis, populated by Greek immigrants (Mačeki iii).

⁷ Dimitar Mirčev, "Beležki po Kukuško-vodenski govori," *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija, nauka, knjižnina* 18 (Sofija, 1901), based on the written work of Šapkarev and L'žev, but Mirčev complained that Šapkarev's own dialect of Ohrid influenced his notetaking (Peev 27). Mirčev's work was criticized for the same reason—that his native Prilep

Studien would seem to be an invaluable source: a description of the dialects based on fieldwork with informants in the region, recorded by a linguist.

The exclusion of linguists of certain nationalities from the field was a serious limitation on dialectological research in Macedonia. Oblak recognized the difficulty. In 1891 the agents of obstruction were the Turkish authorities. In the forward to his work Oblak mentioned the lack of detailed studies on individual dialects in Macedonia and blamed the political and social situation in the country (3). First he lamented the fact that there were no "local" scholars capable of carrying out such work and the foreign scholars were prohibited from doing so by the local authorities.

If someone is interested in Greek or Vlah dialects in Macedonia, then somehow he goes (to it), but it is difficult for him who shows interest in the Bulgarian dialects. The Slavic people and their movements are carefully observed: any intensive contact with Bulgarian peasants, teachers or priests, immediately a strong suspicion is aroused and the dialectological studies field work comes to a forced end. Because of this, in the near future, it will be difficult to bring out of Macedonia Slavic dialectological studies until local scientists are found, prepared for the task and completely objective, who will give us an idea of the Macedonian dialects (3).

On his single field trip outside of Saloniki, leading to his first contact with the local Macedonian population on site, Oblak was struck by catastrophe: he was arrested in the village of Vardarovci as he was sitting with a priest by the fire and looking at his notes. Seven Turkish officers rushed in with guns drawn, Oblak was stripped of all his belongings, including his wristwatch and money, and taken to a Turkish village judge who confiscated his notes. Oblak protested in vain, showing his Austrian passport and letter from the regional governor, but the Turks did not relent. From the village he was taken to Saloniki, twelve hours on horseback, accompanied by two officers and four

dialect, which differed radically from Kukuš and Voden, did not allow him to note the details of these two dialects, separated as they were from each other by more than one hundred kilometers and the river Vardar (Peev 29).

gendarmes, and was so sore that even on the following day he could not sit down because of the pain. He was arraigned early in the morning and released from confinement the following day, but his guide was still held under arrest. Oblak was under suspicion of being a spy and thought by the Turkish authorities to be collecting data on the number of Bulgarians in Macedonia.⁸ So from his single journey out of Saloniki Oblak was arrested and forced to leave Macedonia with his research program unfulfilled.

It was not only the Turkish authorities who obstructed the study of Slavic languages and manuscripts in Macedonia in Oblak's time. Oblak came across several manuscripts from the medieval period: fragments of liturgical texts in the Bulgarian and Serbian redaction of Church Slavonic from the thirteenth to fourteenth and sixteenth centuries (137–138). But such manuscripts were uncommon as Oblak related to Jagić: "Slavic manuscripts have become rare now in Macedonia. In the heated church struggles between the Bulgarians and the Greeks, the latter have destroyed Slavic manuscripts *en masse* since they are unwanted witnesses of the Slavic liturgy" (138). In his final letter to Jagić from Saloniki, Oblak presciently noted: "The conditions will not be right for a long time in Macedonia for such dialectological studies as I had in mind" (155).

Oblak was followed in his study of the Macedonian dialects by two Bulgarians, Anton P. Stoilov and Jordan Ivanov, who visited the Suho region at the turn of the century.⁹ After the Greeks took control of the region in 1913, Bulgarians were no longer able to carry out fieldwork there. Oblak's warning was repeated by L. Miletić, who in 1935 noted that it was not possible for a Bulgarian to do work there owing to the great suspicion of the local powers toward every Bulgarian. For this reason mainly foreigners protected by their governments could serve science with new information in the field (178). Miletić refers to the work of Mazon and his research on Bulgarian dialects in Kastoria and also Małeckı (178).

⁸ The events were accounted in great detail in Oblak's letter to Jagić dated 4 March 1891 (Oblak 152-154).

⁹ Ivanov visited Suho on three occasions, in 1906, 1908 and during the war in 1912-13. In 1900 Stoilov, a teacher of Bulgarian in Saloniki, visited Zarovo and Visoka.

Małecki visited Suho and Visoka with his wife in 1933, spending two months in the first and a month in the second. The following summer he returned to verify his notes. He reported no obstructions from the Greek authorities. Suho had changed much in the period since Oblak's visit to Macedonia; beginning in 1924 a large number of Greek refugees from Asia Minor had moved into the area, while Turks vacated these towns. In 1933 Suho had 4,000 inhabitants and was considered a village siding with the Greeks (*grkomani*) because of the church hierarchy.¹⁰ In 1933, according to Małecki, a large number of people did not identify themselves as Bulgarians, despite not knowing the Greek language; interestingly, they maintained that Bulgarian speech was also to be seen as Greek (ix). The influence of the Bulgarian literary language was small; no one read or wrote Bulgarian. As for national consciousness, the influence of Bulgarian schools was much less than in western Macedonia, where the majority of people passed through Bulgarian schools and saw themselves as Bulgarians (ix).

And the situation remains largely the same today, over a century since Oblak's work in the region, except now the agents of obstruction are no longer the Turks but the Greek government, which resolutely and consistently denies the existence of the Macedonian minority in Aegean Macedonia. Oblak's call for local linguists has in part been fulfilled. There are many professional dialectologists in the Republic of Macedonia, yet they still encounter tremendous barriers in their attempts to research the Aegean Macedonian dialects. The forward of the *Fonološki opisi srpskohrvatskih/hrvatskosrpskih, slovenačkih i makedonskih govora obuhvaćenih opšteslovenskim lingvističkim atlasom* provides proof of the problem when it states that no work on the Macedonian dialects was carried out in Greece or Albania. Instead, only interviews were conducted with people from those regions now living in the Republic of Macedonia. In fact, for one point, number 12 (Visoka), the description of the dialect was done based on the written work of two foreigners (Małecki and Gołąb) (*Fonološki opis* 6). On the positive side, in at least one part of Macedonia, the Republic of Macedonia, dialectological study is and for the past half century has been carried out throughout the territory. All in all, the Aegean

¹⁰ Even in 1891 Oblak noted that the Slavic inhabitants of Suho were on the path of being grecized (7).

Macedonian dialects are, according to Vidoeski, "in the phase of disappearing" (7).

4.0 Vatroslav Oblak as a filter of culture

Oblak's letters to Jagić included as an appendix to *Macedonische Studien* are a valuable historical source, providing glimpses into the ethnographic, cultural, and political situation in Macedonia before the upheavals and great suffering of the twentieth century. It is interesting to note how the Central European Oblak viewed Macedonia, the heart of the Balkans, and its capital city Thessaloniki. His letters are full of insightful, often colorful comments on the people and conditions in Saloniki. His first impressions:

Smells and dirt everywhere, terrible screaming from all sides, there are no people here, only wailing beasts who either run around on two legs or ride a donkey kneeling and screaming. These were the first truly pitiful impressions of Saloniki. There isn't anything European, nor one familiar person with whom it is possible to talk; if I had no responsibility here, I would have left this dear orient a long time ago (128–129).

And several weeks later:

I have almost already grown accustomed to life here. The people are quite unusual. Thus, on a day when it was raining, I met a Turkish officer whose fez was covered with sackcloth, exactly like our shepherds back home. I met the director of the gymnasium as he was carrying home dried meat in a huge basket, a practical man in everything, surely highly valued by his wife (138).

Oblak was wise to avoid the political implications of his research: whether the Slavic population of Macedonia was ethnically Bulgarian or Serbian, for there is no mention of a third variant. He reported to Jagić that he had heard the various positions framed in characteristically stubborn fashion:

Completely contradictory ideas on the Macedonian ethnographic conditions and dialects are heard around me. One decidedly speaks in favor of the Bulgarians, the other

speaks of them as Serbian and then in a way that it is by itself self-evident and it can not be any other way (131).¹¹

And later:

Here we can discuss the Macedonian question, but only as a politicians, not as Slavists" (138). It was very hard for me to realize that in my study on the Macedonian dialects—they think very far ahead of me—I must announce officially in the forward that the scientific results should not be used for political goals. Neither the word "Serbian" nor "Bulgarian" should be mentioned. Finally, we should operate here with X and Y (138–139).

He also showed a sense of humor involving politics:

The question of the position of Macedonian dialects is decided in detail and I am able to return home. The map of Serbian lands has appeared here with a long linguistic and historical introduction published by the Serbian "Omladina." Only Serbians are found in the whole of Macedonia, in western Bulgaria, in Sofia, and in part of the Rodope Mountains (147–148).

In addition to the obstruction on the part of the Turks and the Greeks, Oblak also noted the interference by Bulgarians, eager to prove their position in Macedonia. Oblak was cognizant of their propaganda and he decried how Draganov was forced to change the language of his Bulgarian-Macedonian folk songs in the direction of "Bulgarian" in order to publish them in Bulgaria. Oblak commented on the process of recording sounds, that in Macedonia it was necessary to be very cautious (135). He noted that even in published texts the language is often changed. For example, he claims that even the most careful notes are not above suspicion. "I don't want to say that the Bulgarian note-takers would intentionally create a deception, for them k is a graphic representation for all the sounds located between a hard k and ć, although these can be different in different dialects" (135). He also reported that the Macedonian students in the Bulgarian school in

¹¹ Oblak reported that for the most part the Macedonians referred to themselves as *bugarin* (136).

Saloniki were not very good students of Bulgarian, implying a distance of their dialects from the standard language (129).

Oblak was also cognizant of the fact that it was not just the official propaganda coming from Serbia or Bulgaria proper that was contradictory; he realized quite early to be wary of his own informants. The Russian consul Jastrebov warned him to be more cautious in his research, although Oblak claimed he had already prepared himself for deception and lies on the part of his informants (131). We know that at least one of Oblak's informants lied about the time he was away from his native region: the fifty-five year old worker from Oboki (Debar region) who claimed that he had left his mountainous birthplace for the first time and previously had never seen Saloniki. But even the first evening Oblak was suspicious of his language. Later Oblak discovered that his informant had been leaving his village for different regions of Macedonia and even to faraway Saloniki to work for over seventeen years (5). Presumably, this informant was motivated by economic factors to try to deceive Oblak—that is, he lied to get the money offered for the interview.

Oblak gave another example of informant deception, although clearly the motivation was political and not economic. He reported difficulty in recording the subtle differences in his informants' pronunciation of the pair *k'* or *ć*, which caused him much consternation: "The sounds *k'* and *ć* can lead a man to desperation. I no longer believe even myself" (143). He noticed that the pronunciation of these sounds in the same word in the speech of a single informant was not always the same. This may be explained by the fact that, as Koneski pointed out, even within the same dialect different forms can coexist. Undoubtedly, the informants themselves sometimes made conscious efforts to change their speech in order to be identified with one or the other parties involved in the Bulgarian-Serbian dispute. A rather humorous yet illustrative example is related by Oblak in his letter to Jagić of 12 December:

A comical scene took place in my apartment. A professor from the gymnasium and a local Bulgarian bookseller visited me, both of them good patriots, both from Macedonia, the latter born in Prilep. Of course, we talked about Macedonian dialects. All at once, I heard from the mouth of the man from Prilep a soft

ć. "How did you pronounce that word?" I asked him; —*braća*. "Well, that is exactly the same sound as in Serbian." Then once again I heard the sound ć completely clearly. "But, no," the professor said at once, "that is just a soft k' completely different from the Serbian ć." I let the bookseller pronounce more words with ć, and I always heard clearly ć. But the patriotic professor did not want to admit this, he heard only a soft k', while the fricative element could be heard easily. "You are pronouncing the k' completely different today than you usually do," he said to his friend. Repeated attempts by the man from Prilep to pronounce the Macedonian patriotic k' were in vain. The same held for dj. For a long time he pronounced only dj, only with a great effort could he repeat after his friend g'. Only a few pieces of declination and a good fantasy are missing so that in the dialect from Suho the language of Cyril and Methodius can be found (135).

Today it is known that the k' too is from Serbian influence on Macedonian, having entered the speech during the time of Dušan Silni from Serbian linguistic territory (54), while the original Macedonian reflexes of CS *t+j = št is preserved in those dialects that fell outside this Serbian medieval influence and importantly, outside the unifying influence of standard Macedonian in the post-WW II era—that is, in the dialects studied by Oblak, the lower Vardar dialect group and that of Suho.

While nowhere in *Macedonische Studien* did Oblak foresee the eventual acceptance and codification of the Macedonian language as distinct from both Bulgarian and Serbian, his work and description of the dialects eventually aided in this effort. He was truly the democrat when he stated:

In recent times, in connection with the Macedonian dialects most of all stands the question of their relationship to Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian dialect groups. Work has been done on this much heated question in recent times: are the Slavic inhabitants of Macedonia Bulgarians or Serbs? From the philological point of view this question is rephrased: do most of the characteristic features of the various Macedonian dialects speak in favor of a closer relation with the Bulgarian or the

Serbo-Croatian dialectal groups. Whether the inhabitants will declare themselves as Bulgarians or Serbs, let them decide that themselves, the research of this question is not the subject of Slavic philology (4).

5.0 Conclusion

In summary, Oblak's *Macedonische Studien* is significant historically and as much as the work contains forms and intelligent observations, it remains current and will continue to serve as a source for dialectologists. The legacy of Oblak's work must include the fact that he, like other non-Macedonians (Małeckı, Bernštejn, Mazon, etc.) was instrumental in providing the factual basis for the scientific linguistic proof that Macedonian is a separate South Slavic language. This may be his most important legacy. Since Oblak recorded dialects that have passed away, his *Macedonische Studien* is a most important text for the reconstruction of these now lost dialects.

Skopje, Macedonia

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POVZETEK**ZAPUŠČINA MAKEDONISCHE STUDIEN VATORSLAVA OBLAKA
V MAKEDONISTIKI**

*Avtor natančno opredeli pomembnost dela Vatroslava Oblaka *Makedonische Studien*, in to z dvojne perspektive: jezikoslovne in zgodovinsko-kulturne. Popiše Oblakovo zapuščino in njegove še vedno veljavne prispevke, prav tako pa tudi določena jezikoslovna dejstva, ki jih je Oblak prvi predstavil, ter njegove prodorne komentarje o Solunu, načinu makedonskega življenja, o problemih dialektoloških raziskav na terenu in, o političnih razsežnostih v zvezi s prisotnostjo makedonsko govorečega življa v Egejski Makedoniji.*