

FOLKLORE AND LANGUAGE AS IDENTITY MARKERS IN THE VLACHS' COMMUNITIES FROM ALBANIA AND NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract: *This article aims at analysing the role of culture and language in defining and preserving ethnicity and identity in the Vlachs' communities from South-eastern Albania and North Macedonia. Starting with setting the terms of research for a further project on cultural identities, it underlines the role of the dialects that preserve the culture of these diasporic ethnicities or oases of Romance speaking communities in the Balkan Peninsula. Using the concept of text defined by anthropology and functional linguistics as a modality of evoking events and representing realities in cognitive frames or scenes, this article brings together some cross-cultural perspectives on dances, oral stories, songs and religious manifestations as pillars of identity preservation for some communities under the pressure of national languages and state ideologies. Folk material gathered recently through fieldwork represents the empirical corpus for assessing the role of culture and language in preserving ethnicity.*

Key-words: *culture, language, religion, ethnicity, Romance speaking Balkans*