

Rromane paramiča = Roma Stories.  
Collection 3 / [collected] Rade Uhlik, ed.  
Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić. Sarajevo: Open  
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In 2020 and 2021, the Open Society Fund Bosnia and Herzegovina and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina published two volumes of *Rromane paramiča = Roma Stories Collection / Rade Uhlik* in Sarajevo. The editor of both volumes was Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić. In the first volume, a total of five books consisting of 187 stories were published, which Rade Uhlik recorded in the period from 1928 to 1952. He recorded the stories mostly among the nomadic group of the Roma – Gurbet in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The following year, the second volume was published, which included 133 stories in the Romani language, which Rade Uhlik collected and recorded in the period from 1937 to 1957. The third volume of the book was published in 2022.

*Rromane paramiča = Roma Stories. Collection 3 / [collected] Rade Uhlik* begins with a word of the editor Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić: “The Romani language is our voice for our future. If our language dies, so will our people.” From this statement it is also possible to understand the motivation of the aforementioned editor in collecting, translating and editing stories about the Roma, which were collected by Rade Uhlik. Due to his work on the research of the Romani language, Uhlik can be considered one of the key scientists in the preservation of the Romani language and its standardisation. Several key biographical data about Uhlik need to be pointed out. He was born in 1899 in Sarajevo and was educated in Vienna and Belgrade, where he received his degree in linguistics. After that, he worked as a teacher in Brčko, Tuzla, Prijedor and Niš and then he worked in Sarajevo at the National Museum. Rade Uhlik is the author of significant works on the language and culture of the Roma: *Romane đilja (Roma Poems, Prijedor, 1937)*, *Gypsy Poetry (1957)*; Belgrade, 1982), *Gypsy Stories (Sarajevo, 1957)*, *Dictionary of Bosnian-Romani (Liverpool, 1942–1943)*, *Serbo-Croatian-Gypsy Dictionary (Romane alava, Sarajevo, 1947)* and *Serbo-Croatian-Romani-English Dictionary (Romengo alavari, Sarajevo, 1983)*.

The book was published in Sarajevo by the Open Society Fund Bosnia and Herzegovina and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Uhlik worked after World War II and where a part of his legacy is preserved. The work is divided into a total of nine chapters. In the *Preface* (pp. 15-16), Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić pointed out the issues in the preparation both of this and of the previous editions of Uhlik's stories, especially in the translation of the Gurbet dialect of the Romani language. In this volume, the emphasis is on portraying the Roma culture, such as beliefs, customs, religion, personal names, curses, profanities and others. The editor also translated a part of the texts together with Ruždija Russo Sejdović. The same author analyses in more detail the methodology of translating the Romani language Chergash Gurbet, used by the people who live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sandžak and Montenegro, and whose speech belongs to Western Gurbet or Bosnian branch of the Gurbet dialect. She then addressed the issue of defining the Roma culture, especially in the context of the Romani language, its grammar and spelling, stating:

„...Upon the translation of the Roma culture, within this paper, we are actually involved in translating the specific elements of the culture contained in the original, Romani text, more specifically, in the Gurbet dialect of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Chergash Gurbet, with the aim of learning and studying both the culture and the language of Chergash Gurbet...” (p. 19).

The author then continues with an interesting thesis on the importance of translation for the Roma people, in which she states that it was through the translation process that the Roma “entered the cultures of others” and their national states and languages, which led to their “acculturation process”. After this part, Uhlik's stories are prepared in the following five chapters. The first one is the chapter *Mixed Stories of the Roma Collected by the Teacher Rade Uhlik, Book 11, Sarajevo 1958* (pp. 43-192). The prepared texts were published in the Romani language and in translation. Uhlik collected these stories from 1937 to 1955 among the Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is interesting to note what he wrote the following words in the introduction:

„... I decided to include all the Roma stories which I had collected in several books, so that they would not get lost. If I am lucky and healthy, I will prepare fifteen books like this. These are not nice and important stories, I know. They are simple stories, taken over from the primitive Roma. It is not my fault they are not the best or the nicest. I collected them for the language, Romani, not to retell their...” (p. 44).

The fourth chapter is divided into five smaller sections. The first is titled *Phakale paramiča / Winged Stories* (pp. 47-70) and contains five stories about birds, e.g. *O Ciknorro thaj a dararnni crkli / A Boy and a Terrible Bird* (pp. 51-54). The second part of the first chapter is titled *Čorrika-ne paramiča / Stories about the Poor* (pp. 71-136) and this part includes twelve stories addressing the issue of poverty, e.g. *O čorro avel baro thagar / A Poor Man Becomes a Great King* (pp. 91-94). The third part *Medjedondje paramiča / Tales of Bears* (pp. 137-148) includes two stories on the subject of bears. The fourth part is titled *E Biberčićendje paramiča / Tales about Little Peppers* (pp. 149-188) and includes five stories. The last part of this chapter *Bipačavne paramiča / Distrustful Stories* (pp. 189-192) includes the story *O bipačavdo kandino / Unfaithful Servant*.

The fifth chapter is titled *Hamime romane paramiča, 12 lil / Mixed Roma Stories, Book 12* (pp. 193-336) and contains a total of twenty-two stories. Most of the stories were collected among the Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina and only one story was recorded by Uhlik in Croatia, in Trnova in March 1938. The title of this story is *O tromano čhavo / A Brave Young Man* (pp. 269-282). The story *E Duj Mare / Two Maras* (pp. 328-335) was recorded from three Roma narrators,

one of whom was the narrator from Trnava, Croatia. These stories address different topics such as infidelity, poverty, health, courage, nature, faith (Satan, evil), cunning and the like. One of the included stories is *Sar tradinalje o Rrom thaj o Gadžo / How a Roma and a Serb Chased Each Other* (pp. 311-314) and it describes how one Roma manages to trick a deceptive Serb in a cunning way.

The sixth chapter *Hamime romane paramiča, 13 lil / Mixed Roma Stories, Book 13* (pp. 337-482) includes nineteen stories in which mostly interpersonal and interfamily relationships, as well as relationships between the Roma and the non-Roma, are addressed. From 1937 to 1957, all the stories were written by Roma narrators from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Chapter seven titled *Hamime romane paramiča, 14 lil / Mixed Roma Stories, Book 14* (pp. 483-632) includes twenty-seven stories. The topics of these stories are similar to the previous stories and they are mostly in connection with the topic of interpersonal and interfamily relationships and the relationship between the Roma and the non-Roma. These stories were collected from 1937 to 1956 from Roma narrators from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The eighth chapter is titled *Hamime romane paramiča, 15 lil / Mixed Roma Stories, Book 15* (pp. 633-772) and it includes twenty-seven stories. Most stories primarily address interpersonal and interfamily relationships. Almost all the stories were collected from the Roma from Bosnia and Herzegovina and two stories are from the Roma from Montenegro.

Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić in the ninth chapter titled *Observations Along the Way III* (pp. 773-804) analyses Uhlik's prepared stories, especially focusing on the approach to translating and editing his material. The last chapter of the work titled *Translators and Translation Consultants in the Work of Collection III* (pp. 805-808) includes short biographies of translators Ruždija Russo Sejđović and Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić and of the translation consultants" Šemsa Avdić and Alija Krasnići.

Rade Uhlik was among the first scientists in interwar and post-war Yugoslavia to systematically study the language of the Roma population. His research focus was not limited to the field of linguistics, but in his works one can note something that today would be called an interdisciplinary approach. Consequently, Uhlik made a significant impact with his ethnographic, sociological and historical contributions in terms of understanding of the exceptional complexity of the Roma-related topics. It is primarily for these reasons that the exceptional significance of the continuous study of Uhlik's work is noticeable, which is still partly insufficiently known to the scientific community of Romologists, but also to the general public. Hence, we need to welcome the translation and editorial work of Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić upon the publication of the third volume in which she included 113 stories that Rade Uhlik collected from Roma Gubert from the territory of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro. As Uhlik himself stated in the introduction to these stories, he "collected" them so that they would not "get lost" and hence in order to preserve the language of the Roma. This motivation of Uhlik's is a valuable thought for the rest of us as scientists and Romologists. Consequently, the imminent publication of the fourth volume of Roma stories by Rade Uhlik needs to be welcomed.