

EMINESCU'S "THE MORNING STAR" IN BANAT BULGARIAN LITERATURE – BETWEEN MARGINS AND CENTERS

Svetlana Karadzhova*

Abstract: The community of Bulgarian Catholics in Banat is an example of cultural synchronization through translations of works by Romanian and Bulgarian authors into the Banat version of the Bulgarian literary language. The study presents one of the translations of Mihai Eminescu's most famous poem, „*Luceafărul*” (“*The Morning Star*”) in Banat, focusing on the role of translation in juxtaposing the marginal literature of the Banat Bulgarians with Romanian and Bulgarian literature. What is created in the periphery in relation to the centre becomes a centre in itself. Texts that construct their own cultural space through the interpenetration of different models of describing the world through speech create the conditions for the emergence of a new centre. The theoretical model that represents this process is the philosophy of pragmatism developed by Charles S. Peirce. His semiotic theory captures processes and their changes in motion, is flexible, and offers a valuable terminological apparatus.

Keywords: Banat Bulgarians, Banat, Mihai Eminescu, Star Beshenov, Hyperion

This study analyzes the attempt to synchronise literary creativity within a community perceiving itself as peripheral to the centre, such as the community of the Banat Bulgarians. What is special about this community is that it is marginal to at least two cultural centres. Separated from the development of Bulgarian society, the resettled Catholic Bulgarians share the historical path of the Banat region, being successively part of the Habsburg Empire, of Austria-Hungary, and after the partition in 1918, falling within the borders of two states, Romania and Serbia. The return to the Bulgarian lands of some of the people at the end of the 19th century after the liberation of Bulgaria from

* БАН-Институт за литература, Institute of Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, e-mail: Svetlana.karadzhova@gmail.com.

Ottoman rule turned the Banat Bulgarians into a community living in three countries, which retained its unity thanks to specific characteristics. How do the self-awareness and cultural processes function in the presence of several centres to which they relate and different languages among which they manage to keep their own? I find some of the answers in the emblematic inclusion of Mihai Eminescu's poetry in the functioning of the Banat variant of the Bulgarian literary language¹. This offshoot of the language lives in the dynamics of names not yet fully established, and for the representatives of the community, it is "Palkenian" and for the rest, it is Banat Bulgarian. The Latin alphabet is its hallmark and a sign of the in-betweenness between two different cultural systems. The study will not dwell on translation techniques or successes given the complex inter-lingual situation, but will seek to explain the purpose of the poem's assimilation and inclusion in the community's literary corpus.

Tracing the historical preconditions and particularities will outline the context in which the specific cultural sphere under consideration emerged. In the region of Banat² in the 18th century, the settlement waves created two centres of the Bulgarian community within the Habsburg Empire. The first wave started after the suppression of the uprising in 1688 in the flourishing Catholic centre of Chiprovtsi and the surrounding few villages. The second came from the former Pavlikan villages around Nikopol—Oresh, Trunchovitsa, Petokladentsi, Belene, etc., which had been converted to the Catholic Church. The emergence of Catholicism in Chiprovtsi was due to the settlement of Saxon miners, the so-called Saxons,³ who developed the mining industry and

¹ The term was coined by Magdalena Abadzhieva, who adopted the phrase "Banat variant of the Bulgarian language" (Magdalena Abadzhieva, "The Banat Bulgarians between the Banat speech and the Palken language", *Bulgarian Language and Literature*, no. 65, 2023, p. 527–530).

² Banat is a historical-geographical region in southeastern Europe with the borders of Mureş in the north, the river Tisza in the west, the river Danube to the south, the Carpathians to the east. Its total area is 28.523 sq. km. It is flat in the west and hilly and mountainous in the east. After World War I, the state border was drawn along the topography. The larger eastern part went to Romania, and the western, smaller part to Yugoslavia. The main river in the area is the Timis. The main town is Timișoara (Temesvar). The Romanian part is divided into three counties: Timis-Torontal, Karas and Severin. Banat is one of the three historical regions forming the autonomous region of Vojvodina in Serbia. The other two are Bačka and Srem. A small part of Banat remains in Hungary in the vicinity of the town of Szeged.

³ Saxon miners, called "Saxons" in Bulgaria, who settled in the ore-rich areas of southeastern Europe. "Sassy" is more the name of a craft stratum than an ethnonym. According to Irecek: "Saxons" („sași"). In the Middle Ages, there were colonies of German ore miners in Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Wallachia, who were constantly called Sasi by the Bulgarians and Serbs.

turned the town into a thriving place with their livelihood and cultural life. From there, it began to spread among the Pavlikians⁴ in North-Central Bulgaria. The first mission consisted of Bosnian Franciscans under the leadership of Peter Solinat (1565–1623). He made efforts to attract the Pavlikians settled in Northern Bulgaria. Paulicianism was a dualistic heresy that, along with Bogomilism in the Middle Ages, influenced life not only in Bulgarian lands but also far beyond their borders. It possessed characteristics that distinguished it from the Orthodox Bulgarians. The representatives of the conservative and closed community stand out for their unwavering vitality and persistence in holding to their beliefs. The Chiprovians are craftsmen and merchants of high self-esteem and culture who seek their place in the European world, while the former Pavlikians are peasants who live isolated in small communities and move when threatened.

From these two groups emerged the community of Bulgarian Catholics in Bulgaria. They identify themselves as the bearers of the “strong faith,”⁵ which is distinguished by a high degree of conscious and proud Bulgarian self-consciousness, coupled with the aspiration for constant movement and migration of the Pavlikians. The community experienced upheaval when the uprising was suppressed in 1688 and branched out in a new direction—the community of the Banat Bulgarians was created. In 1738, the village of Star Beshenov (today with the Romanian name of Dudești Vechi) appeared in the Banat plain, founded by the settlers from the villages around the Danube,

There is no doubt that these Saxons came from Magyar at the beginning to Bosnia, namely towards the end of the 12th century, under the famous Kulin Ban; and even now the Bosnian miners use some Old German expressions. Later chronicles attribute the settlement of Saxons in Serbia to King Stefan Vladislav (1234–1240), who was the first to mint Serbian coins. Saxons first appear in Serbian documents under Vladislav’s successor Stefan Uroš I and are frequently mentioned from then until the 15th century, see Ireček, *History of the Bulgarians*, Sofia, Science and Art, 1978, p. 441.

⁴ Paulicianism as a heretical spiritual doctrine emerged in the second half of the seventh century in the eastern border territories of the Byzantine Empire, more precisely in Armenia and Syria during the reign of Emperor Constantine II (641–668). It penetrated the Balkan Peninsula and the Bulgarian lands in the 8th–10th centuries through the deportations of Armenians and Syrians from Asia Minor and their settlement in Thrace to defend the border with Bulgaria, and later in the southwestern Bulgarian lands. From the middle of the 15th century onwards, Pavlikian settlements along the river began to appear in Ottoman records. In the middle of the XVII century the Ottoman Empire already listed 16 settlements in Central Northern Bulgaria, Thrace, Macedonia, see Blagovest Nyagulov, *The Banat Bulgarians*, Sofia, Paradigma, 1999, p. 15–17.

⁵ “The strong faith” is a name by which Catholics in Bulgaria identify themselves, an expression of their great religious perseverance.

and 1741 is the year in which the documents record the appearance of Vinga, founded by the survivors of the Chiprovtsi uprising.

Over the years, as a consequence of demographic growth, several more Bulgarian villages appeared in Banat. After the division of the region between Romania, Hungary, and Serbia in 1918, it fell into the territory of Romania and Serbia. The liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule caused some of the Banat Bulgarians to return to the "old nest," according to the special law on the settlement of the uninhabited lands in Bulgaria promulgated by the National Assembly in May 1880⁶. Currently, the community lives on the territory of three countries, and the processes in the settlements are identical, which is due to the facilitated communication, but also to the self-awareness established over the centuries.

The main characteristics that turn the Banat Bulgarians into a specific offshoot of the general Bulgarian culture are related to the peculiarities of the formative processes. Firstly, the connection with the Catholic Church not only built the community during the migration but also actively helped to preserve it. Second, they accepted the decision to write in Latin in 1862 to 1865 with the creation of their own orthography. Third, a particular consciousness of kinship in an eternally mobile existence was forged. It is "nuclearly native" in its nature, as it encapsulates each of the settlements in capsules of memory, building a network of interactions between the narrative of each settlement's past and the shared memory of the migrations. The narrative of the migrations, the belief, the language, and the costume are characteristic features that anchor the self-consciousness in relative internal stability.

The Romanian language entered through schools and state institutions after 1918, replacing the influence of Hungarian and German from the previous period. The threat of assimilation has existed throughout the period since the beginning of settlement in Banat. Only the dominant languages changed. The most distant link is with Bulgaria due to the remoteness of the diaspora. This creates the conditions in the quest for a distinct literary language that is a treasure trove of community memory, through translations to seek synchronization with models that are the standard and canon in the surrounding cultural and literary environment.

The most prepared for such a leap is the poet Gyuka Gergulov (born 1941 in Star Beshenov, Dudești Vechi), who translated the poem "The Morning Star"

⁶ Blagovest Nyagulov, *op. cit.*, p. 87

by Mihai Eminescu into Banat Bulgarian without knowing the translations of the same poem into Bulgarian. A prominent author and informal community leader, he was the main driving figure of the new “revival” in the emergence of periodicals of the Bulgarians in Banat after the time of totalitarianism in Romania. His life illustrates the stages in the development of literature in the community and the influences to which it was subjected. He studied at a seminary and mastered Latin perfectly, but did not take the path of the priesthood. She developed an appreciation for poetry and the beauty of language with much reading and early creative experiences. He left the seminary and worked as a clerk for the congregation of Old Beshenov, where he remained until his retirement. His literary pursuits were in service to the community, and his poetic talent continued to build a core body of texts that covered all areas of cultural life. He was the spirit who built the concept of the newspaper *Naša glas*, which appeared in Timisoara in 1990, and was its editor-in-chief until 2000.

The main pain of the creators of the word in the community of the Banat Bulgarians is that they are educated in the schools of other countries and meet with the samples of literature that are part of a different cultural background. This leads to the encapsulation of one’s own language to preserve it, but this encloses it within the framework of clan and lifestyle. The universal problems spill over into poetic forms in foreign languages. As a salvation for their own language, under the pressure of an inherently Renaissance aspiration, they began to translate poetry to prove that this branch of the Bulgarian language was also worthy of conveying the beauty of the word.

Many are tempted, but the translation of Mihai Eminescu’s (1850–1889) most significant poem, „Luceafărul” (“The Morning Star”, 1883) by Gyuka Gergulov can be considered an achievement. In Bulgarian, the name of the poem is Hyperion, and in Palkian it is *Zvezdelinku*. The choice of the work was not made at random. Aiming at the most significant example of the poetic word in Romanian literature, it seeks to match the Banat Bulgarian with the poetic qualities of the work. The translation was first published in the newspaper “*Naša glas*,” issue 11 of 1990,⁷ and is presented bilingually in parallel with the Romanian original. The work is introduced with an explanation by the translator of the motives and history of the translation’s realisation, which sets the reader in context and sets out the possible readings. There is another

⁷ Gyuka Gergulov, “Patni Beležci”, *Naša glas*, no. 11, 1990, p. 1–2.

previous attempt to translate Mihai Eminescu's poems into the Banat version of the Bulgarian literary language by Karol Ivančov, but it will not be the subject of this study. It is from him that Gergulov departs, as he explains in the introduction to the poem published in the newspaper:

Tale of the Star

The stars are hard to talk about. They are very high. The most certain thing one can say, however educated one may be, is that they shine, they glitter... Their light is so much greater, clearer, the thicker the darkness around us. And then, as if they were pulling us, inviting us up, on high, into their world, the world of infinity and eternity...

Much has been written, is being written, and will be written for many years about Eminescu and his poetry. But no one could or can say as much about the great genius as his written sweet and sparkling speech, his brilliant ideas, his great soul embodied in his feelings expressed in a single form.

With the certainty that anyone who takes in hand this "star" of Eminescu, the brightest of all that are in the heights of Romanian poetry, and occupies a deserved place among the stars of world literature, has read and knows the precious and profound thoughts and ideas woven into the verses of the wonderfully reworked folktale, I want to mention just a few things about the Palken version that comes with the original philosophical tale.

Although since my childhood, ever since I began to know the beauty of Eminescu's poetry, I have dreamed of translating it into the Palken language, according to the principles I adopted through study and reading, of the true beauty and value of the written word, a sacred fear has kept me from the heights of the great poetry of the Romanian national poet.

A trivial case gave me the final impulse to overcome fear. I don't remember how I came home with a book written on a typewriter. Half of it was with Eminescu's poems... The other half was something that had the pretensions of being the same in Palkenesque. I had not the strength to humble myself to meet this mockery of the poet and of the Palken language... But the bilingual volume fell into the hands of a young man... The verdict was short and definite: it was nothing! Anyone can write this! At that moment, I cared for nothing but the pain of the young man, who I felt was ashamed that his mother tongue "was nothing" because it was incapable of expressing with dignity and beauty the beautiful thoughts, the high ideas, the beautiful poetry.

And I resolved to make this sinful judgment. And not in any other way, but through the translation into our poor language of Eminescu's most famous and most representative poem—the tale of the dawn-maiden, the brightest, most beautiful, most beloved star.

The first thing I had to decide was the name of the main character, who would be the king's daughter's favorite. I settled on the name Zvezdelin, which, though not too common, seemed very appropriate for a hero of a fairy tale. Thus, Zvezdelinku was born... As soon as I got to work, I decided to try my hand at a Palkian fairy tale. For a whole month, Zvezdelinku gave me no peace day or night. There were days when I could only translate one verse at a time. On March 15, 1989, I finished. It was a great day for me, full of satisfaction that one rarely encounters in one's lifetime. I had no other opportunity but to visit acquaintances and friends to whom I read "a Palken tale". And I was glad that along with the approval, I noticed a pride that "we have a language too".

Later, "Zvezdelinku" appeared in *Nasha Glas*, Issue 11 of July 1990, with several typographical and other errors.

If my unworthy work, which was first presented alongside the brilliant verses of Eminescu, awakened good feelings in the souls of the Palkenenses who will read it, it does not at all mean that I have achieved this, but confirms the power and ability of our mother tongue. My greatest satisfaction would be to see another Palkienian "Zvezdelinku" appear soon, which would be even closer to the wonderful, bright star of Eminescu⁸.

This long quotation introduces the thinking of the translator and spiritual leader of the community of the Banat Bulgarians, who himself points out the main motive in undertaking this attempt to synchronize the literary as process in the small group with the great poetic mastery of the Romanian poet. The qualities of the literary work, the plot, the composition, and even the characters remain in the background, because the main thing is whether the language will cope with the transformation and assimilation. Literariness is seen more as an opportunity to manifest language, to fit and sculpt it into beautiful forms. The aim is to move out of the generic enclosure and co-measure with the centre by assimilating and acknowledging its values in another linguistic space. Success in this task means that the language has been elevated to its capacity to function as the centre of its own literary tradition.

Eleven translations of "The Morning Star" exist so far in Bulgaria⁹. The best ones are by Dimitar Pantelev and Elisaveta Bagryana. The translator

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Romyana Stancheva, "Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889)", Nychev. Boyan, Savov, 523. G., Yordanova. M., Stancheva. R, *Balkan Literatures (in two parts)*..., Sofia, Academic Publishing House "Marin Drinov", 2024, p. 523.

Gyuka Gergulov does not know them. He lives in an environment that has encapsulated its Bulgarian identity in another specific variant, which, however, has the same cultural aspirations as the whole from which the community has been "diviated"¹⁰. This puts his experience in the particular position of an authentic step of commensuration, and at the same time, an opportunity to make sense of himself as the twelfth known translation into Bulgarian. Following the theoretical model of the American philosopher Charles Peirce (1839–1914), I will analyze this translation as a sign that dynamically separates meanings in each sphere against which it is considered. If the two cultural centres that are Bulgaria and Romania, despite all their points of contact, are also radically different, given their historical, linguistic, cultural, and other particularities, the Banat Bulgarian community appears as a sign with a particular valence. Marginal for its native Bulgarian culture, to which it aspires to be part of, and marginal for the Romanian country, where the main core of its representatives currently lives. The translator Gergulov's attempt to pull values from Romanian culture as legitimizing the Banat variant of the Bulgarian literary language, correlating it with achievements of the poetic thought of the center to which they are closer in their present existence, strives indirectly for recognition and inclusion in the communication between the two centers. A periphery that has the claim to become the centre in its particular linguistic and signifying space.

Mihai Eminescu marks the beginning of modern Romanian poetry. The philosophical problematics of his works make it possible to define him as a "versified Schopenhauer"¹¹ with typical themes such as essence and mask, transience between past and future, expressed with the present, etc. He is considered the last great romantic of European poetry, who contributed to the enrichment of the Romanian literary language. Apart from being the highest to which a translator can aspire to test his skills and the abilities of the language, there is something else that makes the Romanian classic recognizable as a representative of the Banat Bulgarians living in a particular cultural mix.

For example, his disposition to recreate boundless imaginary spaces; on the other hand, his sense of happy tranquillity (most often projected in the dream and therefore unrealised); his love of folklore (of which he collected samples himself) and his ability

¹⁰ Pasim Ivan Mladenov, *Deviated Literature: A Pragmatist Overview*, Sofia, Paradigma, 2011.

¹¹ Romyana Stancheva, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

to write in the spirit of the vernacular; his interest in history and in the origins of the Romanian people as the descendants of the Geto-Daks.¹²

All of the above characteristics (without the origin) are also found in the self-consciousness of the Banat Bulgarian community, which is distinguished by its developed ability to transcend its existence in the world of spirit and word due to periodic migration and the constant threat of extinction. The imaginary space of the domus (“domus”), which gathers abstract knowledge along a path of development (which is also a path of migration for the community, always associated with specific modalities), is a closed immensity designated by a concept such as the “nuclear native”. The threat of the destruction of the homesteading of the small community generates a perpetual drive to remember and narrate the past, which supports the foundations of memory with the active presence of folkloric consciousness, and at the same time, a drive to push away from it in search of modern means of expression. The attachment to the past activates the question of origins, the relationship with Mother Bulgaria, the path of migration, and the personalities who were leaders along this path. The purpose of the journey is always somewhere beyond, metaphorically signified by the various interpretive variations of “home”.

Hyperion” or “The Morning Star” („Luceafărul”) is a philosophical poem-tale. It is equally close to the metaphysical aspirations of the soul and the romantic attachment to the folkloric fairy tale. The problem of the hero’s name is present in the first translation into Bulgarian by Boris Kolev in 1933. The word in Romanian, *Luceafărul*, means the star Evening Star, and in Bulgarian it is feminine. The first translations seek to change the gender and name the character as Zvezdy or Zvezdan. Similarly, Gergulov’s decision to call him “Zvezdelinko” is in the typical style of the Banat Bulgarian community of using diminutive folk names as formal proper names in extra-documentary usage. In a subsequent edition in 1953, the author used the word “Zvezda” in the form of the name of a “star”. Boris Kolev continued to refine the translation and chose the name “Hyperion,” which replaced the Bulgarian version and remained as a common, but still unsatisfactory name for the translation guild.

The traditional interpretation of the poem in Romania is that Hyperion symbolizes the immortal genius who is in love with an earthly maiden but is doomed never to find love, understood in its human dimension of sharing. In

¹² *Ibid.*

the 1980s. Petru Gorcea¹³ offers another interpretation, in which he emphasizes the role of the heroine, and presents the poem as a transition between fairy tale and idyll. In the initiation, which ends with a wedding, the desire to reconcile the celestial and the terrestrial of the immortality-death antinomy leads. In relation to the interpretation of the role of the translation of the Banat version into English literary language, I point out that the heroine declares her desire for Hyperion to descend to earth and flatly rejects the offer to find immortality by following him. The poem bears the metaphorical desire of translation to "bring down" the classics of Romanian poetry into the limited cultural space of an inherently marginal language, but at the same time to elevate them by attempting to achieve exaltation to the spiritual villages where the original lives. The relationship between the two parties is precisely that third which forges the new meaning. In the process, the Banat English translation emerges as a variant of the recognition and synchronization between cultures.

Hyperion is both a star and an anthropomorphic image in the girl's dream. The space of the dream is where memory as a set of knowledge and experience, the individual's relationship to it, and the interpretations that are the link between the personal and the communal meet. For the Banat Bulgarians, residence in the space of the native language is associated with an afterlife, because it is connected with an exit from the formal life they inhabit in their respective country. For a fuller understanding of the relationship between the afterlife and sleep, as well as the escape of language into sleep, we find evidence in the life story of Peter Dermendzin (1938–2022), the last Bulgarian priest born in Vinga. He studied at the Bulgarian school in Bucharest from 1952 to 1956. He taught in his native village for two years. He entered the seminary in Alba Iulia and graduated in 1963. In 1972 he was imprisoned for propaganda against totalitarianism. He was released in 1980 after insistence by Amnesty International and the Austrian Cardinal Franz König. He emigrated to Canada, where he entered a religious order and returned to Europe after eight years. He served in Munich from 1988 to 2018¹⁴. He was asked which of the languages he preferred, since he knew several. The old priest's answer is categorical: "I still dream in Palkenian". Sleep is the only place and time where he remains alone with himself and can go beyond, into the space where he meets memory through language. What he will take from this side of dreams, what he will

¹³ Petru Mihai Gorcea, *Luceafărul – un mit original*, București, Cartea Românească, 1984, p. 17–22.

¹⁴ Naša glas, br. 17/ 2022, p. 7

bring from this side in the transition between worlds, depends on the ability to read the signs. Language as a home that is only reached in thoughts, in dreams, and memories. That is where the world subsides and peace overwhelms the soul.

The translation of Luceafărul's Banat version into Bulgarian is an invitation to the presence of the Romanian poet Eminescu through the symbolism of Hyperion's dream-image, which is recognised as his own precisely through the proximity of the understanding of the spiritual as dream. The Palkenian version of the poem becomes the edifice of its own domesticity, which functions in the mirror of at least two languages and at least two cultures. The alternative images of the hero are the two alternative sides, the relation between which opens up new directions of interpretation. The name Hyperion misleads that it is always about a man. The 27th stanza, which I present here in its three versions,¹⁵ highlights the differences in perception:

<p>Cobori în jos, luceafăr blând alunecând pe-o rază pătrunde-n casă și în gând și viața-mi luminează.</p>	<p>По някой лъч се ти спуsни, слез, хубавецo кротък, във мойта мисъл проникни, води ме във живота.</p>	<p>Slez dole ti muja zvezda, Pu strelčite spusni se, U kašti vlez, u miseljta, Da ne mi tamnu više!</p>
---	--	--

The Banat Bulgarian's version remains close to the original and the image of the star that is invited to descend the rays below, into the home and mind of the maiden. In Dimitar Pantelev's version¹⁶, the image is anthropomorphic, and the home is completely missing. Gergulov also sticks to a literal rendering of meaning because of the role of the home as a modus in which the community concentrates not only the material signs of belonging, but also language, storytelling, and connection to a shared spiritual essence. Home is associated with thought and the mind. In the dynamics of changing habitats, crossing borders, and interacting with different cultures, what gives security and stability is not here on earth. It has long since been transported to the disembodied realm of the spirit, where speech gives birth to community life. The illumination of this

¹⁵ Rendering the two Bulgarian versions into English would substantially alter their semantic content therefore, I have chosen to preserve the original verses.

¹⁶ Spaska Kanurkova (ed.), *Romanian Classics (XIX–XX centuries)*, World Classics Library, Sofia, National Culture Publishing House, 1973, p. 105–117.

appropriated space is done by the active presence of spirit (the star, the thought, the idea). This element is present in the communication between the corporeal and the eternal at the invitation of the heroine, who is the bearer of the verbal bridge over which the encounter is to take place. Even in a single stanza taken from the general picture of the work, the specificity of the communication between man and spirit is revealed. The invitation comes from the man who in his dream recalls belonging to the eternal. Ascending the path of the word, the soul meets the light in the descending rays, so that the combination of the two entities occurs in the mental home of memory.

The striving to get closer to the universal in the classical examples of foreign literatures, which are at the same time close, given the education and environment in which the community lives, creates a basis for comparison and recognition. The search is for signs to be included in the infinite semiosis, along whose connecting lines the activation of one's own thought takes place. Charles Peirce explains semiosis with the metaphor of the "bottomless lake" from the bottom of which ideas rise or are raised, which on their way up drag other ideas and reach the surface. The process of awareness as a journey upwards is expressed by the heroine's gaze, longing and call to Hyperion. If it is a purely emotional impulse, a human passion chained to the mundane, it is the "thought," the spirit, the dream. Their encounter awakens the "exhausted mind" ("effete mind") of this memory, intrinsic but sunk beneath the surface of awareness, and directs the potential for the unfolding of the recognition of otherness. The universal sound in what the community creates emerges in the process of recognizing foreign patterns that are close to the elements active in consciousness to be embodied in one's own spiritual space through translation. Admitted to the narrative flow in the periphery for the Romanian culture community of the Bulgarians in Banat through a change of language, they become a stepping stone towards the growth of the periphery into a centre and into material for house-building. The community is also peripheral to Bulgarian culture, but in this case, the closeness is stronger based on the language, which has been preserved since the time of the migration three centuries ago, despite the divergent influences over the years.

The translation of Eminescu's most famous poem, "The Morning Star" into the language of the Bulgarians in Banat is yet another ray along which the links between Romanian and Bulgarian culture run. Each of the two national cultural spheres can exist without this small nucleus, which in a sense is their common periphery. The community's attempts to find its place in the larger cultural

process can only remain in the “bottomless lake” of its own history and culture. There they reside until someone or something lets them into the narrative flow. Then people and works become the signs of attempts at recognition that are transformed and enlivened into a new being, a new modality, one of many on the way to a common spiritual space. The reading of the phenomena in the culture of the Banat Bulgarians in the spirit of such activation of fragments of the common memory is the method that best reflects the dynamic structure of the Banat Bulgarian cultural world. He is a mediator, a medium, a ray along which information with different interpretations flows, and this enriches not only his own sphere, but also the Bulgarian culture of which he is an integral part, still waiting for its full acceptance.

Based on these observations, we can point out the following conclusions:

1) The community of the Bulgarians in Banat, by the specificity of its formation and historical path, is an example of a dynamic cultural environment in the periphery of at least two centres. Through the preservation of language, the memory of the past and history, the particular formative phenomena and the results of interactions, this environment strives to become a centre in itself. It transforms its marginal position into an opportunity to draw on different sources and to transform what it recognises as its own in order to enrich its language and its own cultural treasury.

2) The choice of Eminescu’s emblematic and difficult-to-translate poem is a milestone not only in Gergulov’s translation skills, but also in the development of the language of the community of Banat Bulgarians. Its inclusion in the active spiritual exchange takes place in the matrix of symbols, images, and thought matrices recognizable by the community, in which self-consciousness functions. Concepts such as “home,” “dream,” and “thought” have a specific interpretation in the community that has established its habitat in the world of words.

3) The recognition of Gyuka Gergulov’s translation of the poem “The Morning Star” by the Romanian classic Mihai Eminescu as the twelfth translation into Bulgarian will integrate into the common Bulgarian cultural process the efforts of the community to develop its literary language as a variant of the Bulgarian readings. Future Romanian-to-Bulgarian translations will benefit from tracing the path of all attempts at reading between the two languages. The Banat Bulgarian poet hopes for followers who will dare to follow his example in the last paragraph of the explanatory note to his translation.

Bibliography

- ABADZHIEVA, Magdalena, Банатските българи между банатския говор и палкенския език ["The Banat Bulgarians between the Banat speech and the Palken language"], in *Български език и литература [Bulgarian Language and Literature]*, vol. 5, 2023.
- GERGULOV, Gyuka, "Patni Beležci", *Naša glas*, no. 11, 1990.
- GORCEA, Petru Mihai, *Luceafărul – un mit original*. București, Cartea Românească, 1984.
- IREČEK, Konstantin, *Историята на българите [History of the Bulgarians]*. Sofia, Science and Art, 1978.
- KANURKOVA, Spaska (ed.), *Румънски класици (XIX–XX в.) [Romanian Classics (XIX–XX centuries)]*. Sofia, National Culture Publishing House, 1973.
- MLADENOV, Ivan Pasim, *Отклонена литература [Deviated Literature: A Pragmatist Overview]*. Sofia, Paradigma, 2011.
- NYAGULOV, Blagovest, *Банатските българи [The Banat Bulgarians]*. Sofia, Paradigma, 1999.
- PEIRCE, Charles, *Избрани произведения [Selected Writings]*. Translated by Aleksander Feodorov, Sofia, "Iztok–Zapad", 2022.
- STANCHEVA, Romyana, "Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889)", in Nychev. Boyan, Savov. G., Yordanova. M., Stancheva. R. (eds.), *Balkan Literatures (in two parts)*. Sofia, "Marin Drinov" Academic Publishing House, 2004.