

# ANNALES

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## THE PORTRAYAL OF THE BALKANS IN THE SLOVENIAN TRANSLATIONS OF KARL MAY'S *ORIENTZYKLUS*

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### ABSTRACT

*This article discusses the depiction of the Balkans in two Slovenian translations of Karl May's Orientzyklus. This hexalogy was translated for the first time at a time when most of the Slovenian ethnic territory was part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and it was later retranslated when Slovenia was a republic in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A textual comparison of the originals and translations shows that in the first translations, numerous interventions were made to portray the Balkans in a more negative manner than in the originals, whereas in the retranslations, May's frequently negative depiction of the region was somewhat mitigated.*

**Keywords:** Karl May, *Orientzyklus*, Balkans, literary translation, Orientalism, German literature

## LA RAPPRESENTAZIONE DEI BALCANI NELLE TRADUZIONI SLOVENE DELL'*ORIENTZYKLUS* DI KARL MAY

### SINTESI

*Il presente articolo affronta il modo in cui vengono descritti i Balcani in due traduzioni slovene dell'*Orientzyklus* di Karl May. L'esalogia fu tradotta per la prima volta quando la maggior parte del territorio etnico sloveno faceva parte del regno di Jugoslavia e fu poi tradotta nuovamente quando la Slovenia era una delle diverse repubbliche che facevano parte della Repubblica Socialista Federale di Jugoslavia. Il confronto dei testi originali e delle loro traduzioni ha evidenziato numerosi interventi nelle prime traduzioni, volti a rappresentare i Balcani in modo più negativo rispetto al testo originale mentre, nelle traduzioni successive, la descrizione spesso negativa della regione da parte dell'autore fu parzialmente attenuata.*

**Parole chiave:** Karl May, *Orientzyklus*, Balcani, traduzione letteraria, orientalismo, letteratura tedesca

## INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have shown a substantial ideological influence on Slovenian literary translation (Orel Kos, 2001; Ožbot, 2005; Svetina, 2009; Pokorn, 2012; Trupej, 2014; Snoj, 2020). The bulk of this research established that ideological interventions occurred most frequently in the translation of certain elements during the socialist period (1945–1991). However, an analysis of the representation of the Middle East in two Slovenian translations of the first three novels in the series collectively titled *Orientzyklus* (1892) showed that shifts<sup>1</sup> were far more frequent during the interwar period than during the socialist era (Trupej, 2023). The present study will focus on the second three novels of this best-selling hexalogy, while also discussing several relevant passages from the first part of the *Orientzyklus*. The aim of the article is to establish how the Balkans<sup>2</sup> were represented and constructed in the Slovenian translations and to describe the way in which contemporary political positions were reflected in them.

Karl May<sup>3</sup> originally serialized the material for the second part of the *Orientzyklus* – consisting of the novels *In den Schluchten des Balkan* [Through the Gorges of the Balkans], *Durch das Land der Skipetaren* [Through the Land of the Skipetars], and *Der Schut* [The Yellow One] – from 1885 to 1888, i.e., in the years immediately after the establishment of the German Colonial Empire (1884). The novels *In den Schluchten des Balkan* and *Der Schut* were translated into Slovenian by Anton Jehart,<sup>4</sup> while the translation of *Durch das Land der Skipetaren* is anonymous; there is a strong possibility that it was also translated by Jehart. These translations were published in 1931/1932 by the Catholic publishing house Tiskarna sv. Cirila. In 1971, Mladinska knjiga,

the largest Slovenian book publisher, published re-translations by Ludvik Mrzel.<sup>5</sup> During both periods, most of the Slovenian ethnic territory was part of Yugoslavia – in the early 1930s of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and in the early 1970s of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the three novels that this study focuses on, the narrative primarily takes place in locations that are today in Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and (European) Turkey, but were all part of the Ottoman Empire during the time in which the story is set. Some of the locations, i.e. those in Macedonia, eventually became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which was later officially renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Since the rest of the story also mostly takes place in the Balkan Peninsula, the primary purpose of the study is to establish whether the fact that the Slovenian ethnic territory was part of Yugoslavia, which was largely a Balkan country, affected the translation strategies, and how, particularly in comparison to those used for the representation of the Middle East in the *Orientzyklus*. In the first translations, the Middle East was portrayed in a more negative light than in the originals, while in the retranslations it was depicted more favourably (Trupej, 2023). Some aspects of the representation of the Balkans in the translations of the novel *In den Schluchten des Balkan* have already been examined (Birk, 2014, 317–322) and will be referred to in the relevant parts of the article; only examples from that novel not yet addressed will be included in the analysis presented here.

## CORPUS SELECTION AND METHODOLOGY

There are several versions of May's *Orientzyklus* in the source culture. The first book editions (1892) will be cited in this article, but in an effort to establish

1 In the context of translation studies, shifts can be defined as “[a]ll that appears as new with respect to the original, or fails to appear where it might have been expected” (Popovič, 1970; quoted in Bakker et al., 2009, 271) or “changes which occur or may occur in the process of translating” (Bakker et al., 2009, 269).

2 While the Balkans are nowadays considered part of Europe, a century ago this region was widely regarded as part of the Near East (Sowards, 1996; Fleming, 2000, 1226–1228; Todorova, 2009, 28) and the ‘Orient’ (Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992, 3–5; Bakić-Hayden, 1995, 920–922; Fleming, 2000, 1229). The inclusion of the three novels discussed here under the umbrella term *Orientzyklus* [Orient Cycle] also indicates that the European dominions of the Ottoman Empire – known as Rumelia – were considered part of the ‘Orient’. A historical overview of the definition of the term ‘Balkans’ and the areas included in it can be found in Slukan-Altić (2011).

3 Karl May (1842–1912) was a German writer, best known for his ‘travel tales’ set in the ‘Orient’ and the American Old West. He is one of the best-selling German authors of all time, with an estimated 200 million copies of his works sold worldwide. Many of his stories – including the *Orientzyklus* – have been adapted into commercially successful movies.

4 Anton Jehart (1881–1948) was a priest, theologian, writer and translator. He studied theology and after being ordained as a priest he worked in parishes in several Slovenian towns. He obtained a doctorate in theology from the University of Vienna in 1909, and in 1920, he became a professor at the Maribor Seminary, where he taught until his retirement in 1939. In the 1920s, he travelled to the Middle East and published accounts of his travels. He was a polyglot and translated literary works from several languages (Bračun, 2020).

5 Ludvik Mrzel (1904–1971) was a journalist, author and translator. During the interwar period, he worked as a journalist and published several literary works. He spent much of World War II in Italian and German prisons or concentration camps. At the Dachau trials held in socialist Yugoslavia after the war he was sentenced to 12 years in prison and was sent to the political prison Goli otok. After he was paroled in 1955, he struggled to find steady employment and supported himself as a freelance translator until his death (Čop, 2018).

whether a certain changed or added element was present in another version of a particular text, the following editions were additionally checked: the editions from May's posthumously published collected works (1913), the last published editions that were overseen by the author himself (1909), and the initially serialized stories in the magazine *Deutscher Hausschatz in Wort und Bild* (1881–1888). (The first Slovenian translations of the novels are stated as being authorized, thus it can be presumed that one of the aforementioned versions was used.) The compared passages are somewhat different with regard to orthography, but no changes in the representation of the Balkans were observed. A comprehensive list of the differences between the first book editions of the *Orientzyklus* and the editions from May's collected works can be found in Ilmer and Pielenz (1976, 6–15).<sup>6</sup>

A translation of the *Orientzyklus* was also serialized (1908–1910) in *Glas naroda*, the most widely read Slovenian American newspaper, and in 1910 it was published in book form by Slovenic Publishing Co. in New York. Since this translation was created in a different cultural environment, i.e. the USA, it is not included in this analysis, which focuses on the translations that were created during the time when the Slovenian ethnic territory was part of countries that also included Balkan nations.

According to Johan Heilbron (2010), in translations into languages with a peripheral position in the world system of translation, foreignizing<sup>7</sup> translation strategies tend to be employed more frequently than in translations into central languages (cf. Zlatnar Moe et al., 2015, 122–123). The textual analysis will show to what extent foreignization was used in the translation and the retranslation of the *Orientzyklus* into Slovenian – a peripheral language. Another theory that will be tested is the *rettranslation hypothesis*, according to which the first translations of literary works tend to be more domesticating, while foreignizing strategies tend to be employed more frequently in later

translations (Berman, 1990; cf. Tahir Gürçağlar, 2009, 233–234).

The analysis was done following the approach proposed by Luc van Doorslaer (1995, 256): the whole texts of the originals and their translations were read independently from one another, and relevant elements (i.e., any negative discourse about the Balkans in general or particular ethnic groups in that region present in either the source or target text) were selected for comparison. After the analysis of the shifts on the textual level, the results are put into a *systemic context* (Lambert & van Gorp, 2006, 47), i.e. compared to the findings of other relevant research and considered in a wider historical context.

#### KARL MAY'S PORTRAYAL OF THE BALKANS

Karl May's *Orientzyklus* has had a substantial influence on the German perception of the Balkans (Kovačević, 1991, 222; Schmidt-Neke, 1994, 248; Previšić, 2016, 79–80; 2017, 112–113).<sup>8</sup> The story is set sometime in the early to mid-1870s (Schmidt-Neke, 1994, 248; 2006, 162) and is narrated by a first-person re-teller, a German *deus ex machina* known under the alias Kara Ben Nems – a symbolic representation of the German nation (Hegedűs, 2010, 1232, 1237). In the second part of the narrative, this literary counterpart of the author is travelling through the Balkans hard on the heels of several members of a widespread criminal organization (whose leader is based in what is today Albania), undergoing various perilous adventures along the way and usually surviving them without so much as a scratch.<sup>9</sup>

Some scholars have expressed dissatisfaction with how May portrayed the Balkans; he frequently compared different aspects of the Balkans to Germany or Western Europe – the former constantly falling short (Kovačević, 1991, 230–232; Hegedűs, 2010, 1236–1237; Babka, 2015, 106–109). In this

6 According to Ilmer and Pielenz (1976, 3), changes that could be deemed 'interventions' were seldom made by May's estate in the posthumously published editions of his novels: these two scholars compared different editions of 24 novels and found fewer than a dozen such changes in a corpus comprising more than 14,000 printed pages.

7 Heilbron is referring to the terms *foreignization* and *domestication* as initially used by Lawrence Venuti: a foreignizing translation preserves elements from the source text that might appear foreign to the target readership, whereas a domesticating translation adapts the text in order for it to be in line with the norms and conventions of the target culture (Venuti, 1995). This scholar has since somewhat changed the definition of the terms: "The terms 'domesticating' and 'foreignizing' do not describe specific verbal choices or discursive strategies used in translation, but rather the ethical effects of translated texts that depend for their force and recognition on the receiving culture" (Venuti, 2017, xiii).

8 Considering May's great popularity in Slovenia until almost the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Trupej, 2020), it can be presumed that – at least to some extent – the *Orientzyklus* also influenced the Slovenian perception of the Balkans (cf. Previšić, 2016, 79).

9 While in the *Orientzyklus* it is merely implied that the first-person re-teller is the author himself, May later explicitly stated that he experienced all the adventures that he wrote about in his books, for instance by connecting Kara Ben Nems / Old Shatterhand with Karl May in the novel *Satan und Ischariot*, which was originally serialized between 1893 and 1896 (Roussel, 2013, 75), as well as in a letter from 1897 (Roxin, 1974, 21). Furthermore, the supposed authenticity of May's experiences was affirmed in several meta-texts accompanying the serialized stories (Akyıldız, 2009, 130). At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, May's claim that he had experienced what he wrote about was debunked in the press, which – among other things – led to a scandal and eventually to several lawsuits (Kohlrausch, 2010; cf. Akyıldız, 2009, 137).





**Figure 1: Karl May dressed as Kara Ben Nemsî in 1897**  
(Source: Wikimedia Commons).

context, Michael Schmidt-Neke (2006, 153) went so far as to refer to May as the “most successful propagator of Orientalism”,<sup>10</sup> and, for instance, described his portrayal of the Albanian forces in Ottoman law enforcement as follows:

*They terrorize the population simply of their own accord and allow themselves to be used by corrupt officials to plunder the populace. They are chained dogs in human form, who are sicced by their masters on both enemies and subjects alike but are almost impossible to keep under control. They do not even shy*

*away from cooperating with the criminals against whom they were actually supposed to be fighting.* (Schmidt-Neke, 1994, 267)

Katalin Kovačević (1991, 229–230) observed that May portrayed Macedonia to be almost exclusively populated by Albanians, who are predominantly characterized in a negative manner. The same scholar remarked that May’s representation of Macedonia reveals a political agenda (Kovačević, 1991, 229). More precisely, “Karl May was not interested in objectively portraying the conditions in the Balkans, i.e., in Macedonia, but rather in one-sidedly highlighting the primitive characteristics of these areas; he was thereby in harmony with the prevailing political aims of his time” (Kovačević, 1991, 234; cf. Previšić, 2017, 119, 124). Similarly, Nina Berman (1996, 145; cf. Berman, 1996, 157–158) stated that in the *Orientzyklus*, “May produced a revealing mirror of the ideas about the peoples of the Orient that were dominant in his time. Ultimately, this representation of the Orient promoted the legitimacy of the economic intervention sought by the Wilhelmine Empire and expansion into the Balkan areas as well as into regions of the Ottoman Empire.” She concluded that May generally portrayed ‘Balkanites’ more negatively than other peoples in the ‘Orient’, which justified Kara Ben Nemsî’s more authoritarian *modus operandi* in those regions (Berman, 1996, 142–148). When discussing May’s portrayal of the Balkans, Anna Babka (2015, 111) made a similar observation, referring to the protagonist as a “cultural colonizer”. Schmidt-Neke (2006, 165–166) stated that according to May, the Ottoman Empire suffered because of incompetent bureaucrats and criminal organizations, and that by getting rid of several members of the latter, Kara Ben Nemsî did his part in healing it. The German Empire had substantial economic interests especially in the European part of the Ottoman Empire (Berman, 1996, 59–60), and it is therefore not surprising that May’s literary *alter ego* propagated the view that the German Empire could help the Turkish state, while at the same time he condemned the other great powers for trying to bring about its downfall (Schmidt-Neke, 2006, 163).<sup>11</sup> In accordance with this view, May generally characterized the freedom fighters in the Balkans – who were opposing the Ottoman overlords – as bandits (Kovačević, 1991, 232–233; cf. Schmidt-Neke, 2006, 177; Previšić, 2016, 83, 88; 2017, 116, 119, 121–122).

<sup>10</sup> All quotations not originally in English were translated by the author of this article.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Roussel (2013, 74) points out that in his feuilleton *Deutsche Herzen – Deutsche Helden*, which was serialized between 1885 and 1888, May expressed negative opinions about nations who meddled in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, i.e., the British, French and Russians – but not the Germans. By not setting his stories in any of the colonies where the German Empire was on its own *mission civilisatrice*, May was able to “adopt an oppositional stance in relation to imperialism without the need to criticize German colonial policy” (Ferens, 2008, 96).

## ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST SLOVENIAN TRANSLATIONS

The Balkans are indirectly present in the narrative long before Kara Ben Nemsî reaches the Balkan Peninsula. Albanians are mentioned for the first time when the protagonist and his loyal servant Hadschi Halef Omar are staying in Mosul; the latter – using the Turkish ethnonym for Albanians – alleges how the *mutasarrif* [governor] of Mosul makes use of his Arnauts: „Er spricht zu seinen Arnauten: ‚Gehet, zerstört, mordet, aber bringt mir Geld!‘ Sie thun es, und er wird reicher als der Padischah“<sup>12</sup> (May, 1892a, 505). In the translation, the second sentence is expanded with the following statement: „In Arnauti smejo počenjati, kar hočejo, nihče ni varen pred njimi, pa zgodi se jim nič“<sup>13</sup> (May, 1928–1930, 14). Kara Ben Nemsî eventually manages to get in the *mutasarrif*'s good graces and receives an escort of five Arnauts and five bashi-bazouks from him. While in the original, this is related with no accompanying value judgments (May, 1892a, 532), the translation is expanded with the following sentences:<sup>14</sup> „Arnaut je turško ime za Albanca. Do zadnjega časa so bili bojoviti Albanci jedro turških vojsk. Bašibozuki – beseda pomeni pravzaprav norega, zdivjanega človeka – so redni turški vojaki. V vojski se nikdar niso dobro obnesli“<sup>15</sup> (May, 1928–1930, 40). The additional information provided by the translator was somewhat inaccurate: bashi-bazouks were not regular but rather irregular soldiers. Although these were indeed frequently of Albanian origin, they were recruited from other ethnic groups as well (Edmonds, 2020); this statement thus does not necessarily reflect negatively on Albanians but rather on the Ottoman Army in general.

Later, when the protagonist reaches the Albanian ethnic territory in the Balkans, the narrator begins to use the term *Skipetar* (a variant of the Albanian endonym *Shqiptar*) instead of *Arnaut*. At a certain point in the narrative, the adjective *divjaški* [savage]

is added to the narrator's description of Albanians in the Slovenian translation (May, 1892d, 82; 1932a, 88); sometime later, Albanians are characterized as *halbwild* [semi-savage] in the original but as *divjaki* [savages] in the translation (May, 1892e, 272; 1932b, 251). The narrator also observes the following about the nature of the Albanian people: „Der Skipetar rächt nur das, was ihm selbst und den Gliedern seiner Familie oder seines Stammes geschehen ist“<sup>16</sup> (May, 1892e, 422). In the translation, Jehart expanded this statement to characterize this ethnic group as even more self-centred: „Škipetar nima razvitega čuta za splošno socialno pravičnost. Maščevalen je, pa maščeval bo krivice, ki so zadele njega osebno, njegove sorodnike ali pa njegov rod. Za tujca se ne bo potegnil, maščuje naj se sam“<sup>17</sup> (May, 1932b, 372).

A different kind of shift occurs in the translation of the following sentence: „Es sollen viele Skipetaren dort sein, und die taugen nichts“<sup>18</sup> (May, 1892d, 129). The translation reads: „Mnogo Škipetarjev živi v Skoplju. In Škipetarji niso ravno pobožni ljudje“<sup>19</sup> (May, 1932a, 131).<sup>20</sup> This change of meaning in the translation (which is less damning than the statement in the original) indicates how much importance the translator ascribed to religiousness, while from an intervention made later, it is evident *which* was the 'right' religion; after Kara Ben Nemsî had disguised himself as a *sharif*, and kept the outfit on longer than needed, he – in the function of narrator – commented: „Ich hatte unterwegs gar nicht daran gedacht, meine Verkleidung abzulegen. In Mitte einer fanatischen Bevölkerung wäre das höchst gefährlich gewesen; hier aber hatte es nicht so viel zu bedeuten“<sup>21</sup> (May, 1892d, 181). In the translation, two significant additions to the latter sentence can be found: „Med fanatičnim mohamedanskim prebivalstvom bi bilo nevarno, v Radoviču [sic] pa ni pomenilo mnogo, prebivalstvo je bilo po večini pravoslavno“<sup>22</sup> (May, 1932a, 186). In the original, the meaning

12 He says to his Arnauts: „Go, destroy, murder, but bring me money!“ They do it, and he is becoming richer than the padishah. (Throughout the analysis, gloss is provided by the author of this article.)

13 And the Arnauts can do what they want, no one is safe from them, but nothing happens to them.

14 Unless indicated otherwise, such additional information by the translator is provided in the main text, not in a footnote.

15 Arnaut is the Turkish name for an Albanian. Until recently, the pugnacious Albanians formed the core of Turkish armies. Bashî-bazouks – the word actually means a crazy, mad person – are regular Turkish soldiers. They never did well in the military.

16 The Skipetar only takes revenge for something that was done to himself and members of his family or tribe.

17 The Skipetar does not have a developed sense of general social justice. He is vindictive, but he will avenge the injustices that were done to him personally, his relatives or his tribe. He will not side with a stranger; let him take revenge himself.

18 It is said that many Skipetars live there, and they are no good.

19 Many Skipetars live in Skopje. And Skipetars are not exactly pious people.

20 It should be noted that in a footnote, the translator had previously stated that there were both Muslims and Christians (including Catholics) among Albanians (May, 1932a, 5).

21 While on the way, I had not even thought to take off my disguise. This would have been most dangerous amid a fanatical populace; but here it did not mean much.

22 This would have been dangerous among a fanatical Mohammedan population, but it did not mean much in Radoviš, where the population was mostly Orthodox.

is merely implied, whereas in the translation, the narrator explicitly claims that fanaticism is characteristic of Muslims and that the opposite is true for adherents of a Christian denomination in a town that lies in what is now North Macedonia – the religion of the inhabitants of Radoviš had not been mentioned before.

Another negative characteristic ascribed to the Islamic world can be found in the part of the narrative where Kara Ben Nemsí is in a blood feud with someone from the Albanian tribe Mirdita (May, 1892d, 289); the translator added the following statement by the narrator: “Krvna osveta obvladuje ves mohamedanski svet. Neizprosna, kruta je njena postava, nobenega usmiljenja ne pozna, ne za osvetnika ne za njegovo žrtev. Gorje njemu, ki si je krvno osveto nakopal, pa če je tudi brez lastne krivde in v silobranu preli kri, gorje tudi osvetniku, če ni maščeval krvi svojega sorodnika”<sup>23</sup> (May, 1932a, 297). Muslims are also denigrated when two negative characters spit in an accomplice’s face after witnessing him falsely swear by the Prophet Muhammad and the caliphs; the narrator makes the following remark: “Sie nahmen einen Mord mit Leichtigkeit auf ihr Gewissen, aber eine Lästerung des Propheten und seiner Nachfolger empörte ihr ganzes Wesen”<sup>24</sup> (May, 1892d, 510). In the translation, this sentence is prefaced with the following added statement: “Tak je mohamedan —”<sup>25</sup> (May, 1932a, 498). While in the original, merely the particular two characters are referred to, in the translation, this negative characteristic is thus ascribed to Muslims in general.

The Ottoman Empire in general is often also portrayed more negatively than in the source texts. For instance, an all-encompassing condemnation of the acquisitiveness of the Turkish officials can be found in the part of the narrative where Kara Ben Nemsí and his fellow travellers are staying in Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Soon after arriving in this metropolis, the protagonist comes upon a public house in which people are allegedly being robbed and murdered, and where spoils are divided. When Kara Ben Nemsí learns that high officials also frequent the establishment, he does not make any remark about this in the original

(May, 1892b, 490), while in the translation a long commentary is added – the Balkans are also mentioned:

*Po vseh deželah padišahovih, od Eufrata do Nila, od Bospora do Donave, po Orientu in po Balkanu je vladala povsod ista turška morala: padišah sam potrebuje denar, ti pa si vzemi plačo, kjer in kakor moreš! In od kadija do wezirja, od vaškega kjaje do mogočnega mutasarrifa, vse je ožemalo in izmozgavalo ubogo ljudstvo, da si »poišče svojo plačo«. Ni čuda, če je taka morala vzgojila zločince, uničila zmisel [sic] za pravičnost in red in rodila neštete krivice in zločine —.*<sup>26</sup> (May, 1930–1931, 469–470)

A similarly severe condemnation is added in the translation when relating Kara Ben Nemsí’s experience with the authorities in Ostromdscha (Strumica) (May, 1892d, 24) in what is today North Macedonia – the narrator describes what happens when Ottoman officials confiscate something: “Izgovarjajo se na postavo, zasežejo in zaplenijo prijetim zločincem, kar najdejo pri njih, — in živa duša ne vidi več zaplenjenega blaga. Vse izgine v žepih slabo plačanih padišahovih namestnikov in sodnikov”<sup>27</sup> (May, 1932a, 33). The Ottoman Empire’s law enforcement and/or justice system is criticized several more times during the protagonist’s travels across the Balkan Peninsula by means of various additions (May, 1892d, 69, 73, 295; 1932a, 74, 78, 305; 1892e, 2, 343–344; 1932b, 6, 309).

On numerous occasions, the narrator described certain negative characteristics of the locations he was travelling through and/or its people but did not claim that a particular characteristic applied to the whole region. However, this is quite often the case in the translations – the ‘Orient’ is depicted more negatively by short additions. For instance, when the narrator relates how Omar Ben Sadek, a member of the protagonist’s travelling party, and a doctor from Radowitsch (Radoviš) were insulting each other, he remarks that the latter seemed to be a cursing virtuoso (May, 1892d, 195), whereas in the translation the claim is added that ‘Orientals’ in general are experts in using profanity (May, 1932a, 201). A similar shift occurs when the

23 The blood feud dominates the whole Mohammedan world. Its law is relentless and cruel, it knows no mercy, neither for the avenger nor for his victim. Woe to him who incurred a blood feud, even if he shed blood through no fault of his own and in self-defence, and woe to the avenger if he did not avenge the blood of his relative.

24 They took murder upon their conscience with ease, but their entire being was repulsed by the blasphemy against the Prophet and his successors.

25 Mohammedans are like that.

26 The same Turkish morals existed in all the lands of the padishah, from the Euphrates to the Nile, from the Bosphorus to the Danube, in the Orient and the Balkans: the padishah needs the money, and you take your cut where and whichever way you can! And everyone from the qadi to the vizier, from the village muhtar to the mighty mutasarrif, sucked the poor people dry to “get their cut”. It is no wonder that such morals have brought up criminals, destroyed the sense of justice and order, and brought forth countless injustices and crimes.

27 They plead the law, seize and confiscate whatever they find with the arrested criminals – and no living soul sees the confiscated goods again. Everything disappears into the pockets of the padishah’s poorly paid deputies and judges.



narrator gives an account of how one of the women in Ostromdscha thanked him for being merciful with her – the original reads: “Ihren Dankesworten entzog ich mich, indem ich mich schnell entfernte”<sup>28</sup> (May, 1892d, 65). The translation is changed to make a negative pronouncement about the servility of ‘Orientals’ in general: “Odtegnil sem se njeni orientalski klečeplaznosti in naglo odšel”<sup>29</sup> (May, 1932a, 70). Similarly, while in the original the narrator states that people in a certain region in what is today North Macedonia are gullible (May, 1892e, 53), the supposed gullibility of the Orient as a whole is referred to in the translation (May, 1932b, 58).

Occasionally, the translations are rewritten to denigrate both the ‘Orient’ and the Balkans in one breath. For instance, when Kara Ben Nemsí and his companions are travelling through a region that is today in North Macedonia, they are transported across a river by a ferryman, who afterwards – in addition to the fee that he had already received – asks for baksheesh (May, 1892d, 568). The following statement is added in the translation: “Od Balkana do Sahare, povsod je orientalec [sic] isti —”<sup>30</sup> (May, 1932a, 550). When entering one of the bedrooms in a guest house in the village Dabila (Dabilje), also located in what is today North Macedonia, the narrator makes the following observation: “Betten gab es nicht”<sup>31</sup> (May, 1892c, 447). Jehart transformed this statement, which referred only to a particular bedchamber, into the following generalization: “Postelje navadni ljudje v Orientu in tudi na Balkanu ne poznajo”<sup>32</sup> (May, 1931–1932, 420). The narrator then comments on the lack of hygiene in ‘Oriental’ bedchambers (May, 1892c, 447–448), to which Jehart added the following statement: “Evropejec bo rajši spal na prostem ko pa v takih ‘spalnicah’”<sup>33</sup> (May, 1931–1932, 420). With the last two instances of rewriting, the translator indicated that he did not consider the ‘Orient’ and the Balkans quite one and the same, but also that he did not regard the part of the Balkans ruled by the Ottoman Turks as a part of Europe – despite the fact that the location in question was a part of Yugoslavia at the time that he was translating the novel.

Various other nouns and adjectives or full sentences are added in the translation to express negative opinions about that Balkans and/or its people (May, 1892b, 637; 1930–1931, 622; 1892c, 138; 1931–1932, 122; 1892d, 73–74, 97, 137,

220, 231, 333, 514; 1932a, 78, 80, 100, 140, 228, 240, 338, 501), etc. Occasionally, elements from the originals that portray the Balkans in a negative light are omitted. For instance, the following sentence that denigrates Islam: “Der wilde Araber ist nicht mehr der einzige Bekenner des Islams; darum ist der Islam jetzt für euch zur Zwangsjacke geworden, unter deren Druck ihr hilflos leidet” (May, 1892c, 279). This statement is not translated into Slovenian (May, 1931–1932, 266). There are several other similar omissions (May, 1892c, 145–146, 425–426, 541; 1931–1932, 127–128, 404, 514–515; 1892d, 150–151; 1932a, 150; 1892e, 344; 1932b, 313). However, this translation strategy is insignificant compared to the more than 40 alterations by means of which the Balkans are represented in a more negative light than in the originals (cf. Birk, 2014, 321).

#### ANALYSIS OF THE SLOVENIAN RETRANSLATIONS

Ludvik Mrzel did not make interventions in the texts as frequently as was the case in the first translations, and the ones he did make had the opposite effect of those of his predecessor(s). Sometimes the omitted elements were at the level of the phrase: for instance, while in the source text the designation “räuberische Skipetaren” [thieving Skipetars] (May, 1892e, 272) is used, in the target text, the reference to nationality is omitted, referring just to “roparji” [robbers] (May, 1971d, 216). A similar shift occurs when the narrator describes an antagonist’s evil scheme and concludes by exclaiming: “Das war ein echter Skipetarenstreich!”<sup>34</sup> (May, 1892e, 201). In this instance, the whole sentence was deleted in Mrzel’s translation (May, 1971d, 161).

The translator used the same strategy in relation to one of Kara Ben Nemsí’s travelling companions, a Montenegrin by the name of Osko. After the latter kills an adversary on whom he had sworn vengeance, the narrator makes the following generalization about the ‘Orient’: “Das ist der Orient: neben blendendem, trügerischem Licht ein desto tieferer, unheimlicher Schatten!”<sup>35</sup> (May, 1892e, 210). This sentence is absent in the translation (May, 1971d, 168).

Mrzel avoided disparaging Islam in the part of the narrative where Kara ben Nemsí is discussing religion with a Muslim man from Koschikawak

28 I evaded her words of thanks by quickly removing myself.

29 I avoided her Oriental servility and left quickly.

30 From the Balkans to the Sahara, Orientals are the same everywhere.

31 There were no beds.

32 Ordinary people in the Orient and also in the Balkans are not familiar with beds.

33 A European will rather sleep in the open air than in such ‘bedrooms’.

34 This was real Skipetar devilry!

35 This is the Orient: next to dazzling, deceptive light, an even deeper, more sinister shadow!



(Krumovgrad) in what is today Bulgaria. The latter remarks that the local Christians are not good people; the protagonist retorts with the following claim: “Nun, dann mußst du wissen, daß das Unkraut am allerbesten auf schlechtem Boden gedeiht. Du gibst damit dem Islam ein schlechtes Zeugnis, denn er würde dieser schlechte Boden sein”<sup>36</sup> (May, 1892c, 279). The translator deleted the latter sentence (May, 1971b, 222).

In the retranslations, interventions are most frequent in the part of the narrative taking place in what is today North Macedonia. One of them occurs when Kara Ben Nemsî is talking to the police force in a village named Sbiganzý (Žiganci) and makes the following patronizing proclamation: “Und ich bin aus einem Lande, in welchem ein Knabe klüger und unterrichteter ist als hier bei euch ein Mann, den ihr für klug und weise haltet”<sup>37</sup> (May, 1892d, 323). This statement is deleted in the Slovenian version (May, 1971c, 251). In the part of the narrative taking place in Kilissely (Sveti Nikole) one of the antagonists is forced to bastinado his accomplice; initially, he does not strike as hard as he could, but eventually he does, about which the narrator offers the following observation: “Es giebt eben Menschen, denen beim Anblick des Blutes erst die Blutgierde kommt. Wilde scheinen sogar berauscht davon zu werden”<sup>38</sup> (May, 1892d, 505). While in the original, the narrator seems to consider the person administering the punishment to be like the ‘savages’ referred to, neither sentence is included in the translation (May, 1971c, 388). A further shift occurs when Kara Ben Nemsî’s travelling party is on the way to Glogovik (Lakavica); the narrator makes the following remark about the journey: “Die Gegend war bergig, aber so wenig interessant, daß gar nichts über sie zu sagen ist. Erreichten wir ja einmal ein kleines Dorf, so widerte uns die Armseligkeit desselben so an, daß wir uns beeilten, hindurch zu kommen”<sup>39</sup> (May, 1892e, 57). Mrzel deleted the latter part of the first sentence and completely changed the meaning of the second sentence – the translation reads: “Pokrajina je bila zelo hribovita. Ježa iz doline Treske je našim konjem nalagala velike napore”<sup>40</sup> (May, 1971d, 50).

## DIRECT COMPARISON OF THE SLOVENIAN TRANSLATIONS

The passages discussed below, for which different strategies were used in the translation and the retranslation, will shed light on the different approaches used in the two historical periods in question.

When the protagonist’s travelling party arrives in Adrianople (Edirne), a city in the southeast of the Balkan Peninsula, the narrator makes the following observation about this former capital of the Ottoman Empire: “Von weitem bot uns Adrianopel einen prächtigen Anblick dar; als wir es aber erreicht hatten und durch seine Straßen ritten, ging es wie mit allen andern Städten des Orientes: sie verlieren in der Nähe ihre Schönheit und erfüllen niemals das, was sie aus der Ferne versprechen”<sup>41</sup> (May, 1892b, 552). In the first translation, the following description of ‘Oriental cities’ is added: “namesto lepote in slikovitosti vidiš nesnago, nered, zanemarjenost”<sup>42</sup> (May, 1930–1931, 540). In the retranslation, the description of Adrianople is not changed, but instead of claiming that the negative characteristics can be attributed to cities in the ‘Orient’ *en masse*, the narrator refers merely to Turkish cities: “Iz dalje je pogled na Drinopolj v resnici čudovit, ko pa smo prišli do njega in zajahali na njegove ceste, je bilo z njim kakor pri vseh drugih mestih po Turčiji: od blizu izgubijo svojo lepoto”<sup>43</sup> (May, 1971a, 428). Similar shifts in both translations can be observed in the part of the narrative taking place in Ostromdscha, which is described as follows in the original:

*Die Stadt bot – wenigstens so weit, wie wir sie jetzt erblickten – gar nichts Besonderes. Orientalische Häuser und Hütten, die ihre fensterlosen Mauern nach der Straße kehren. Armselige Bauwerke, dem Einsturz nahe. Wege, aus trockenem Schlamm bestehend, von welchem an heißen Tagen ein entsetzlicher Staub aufwirbelt, während man bei Regenwetter bis an die Kniee in den Kot einsinkt. Dazu eine zigeunerhafte Staffage, schmutzige*

36 Well, then you must know that weeds thrive best in bad soil. You are thereby giving a bad testimony to Islam because it would be this bad soil.

37 And I am from a country where a boy is wiser and better educated than a man among you whom you think clever and wise.

38 There are simply people whose bloodthirstiness is only awakened at the sight of blood. Savages even seem to get intoxicated by it.

39 The region was mountainous, but so uninteresting that nothing can be said about it. Whenever we reached some small village, we were so disgusted by its wretchedness that we hastened through it.

40 The landscape was very hilly. The ride from the Treske valley put a great strain on our horses.

41 From afar, Adrianople offered us a splendid sight; but when we reached it and rode through its streets, it was like all other cities in the Orient: up close they lose their beauty and never fulfil what they promise from afar.

42 [I]nstead of beauty and picturesqueness, one sees filth, disorder, neglect.

43 From afar, Drinopolj looked really splendid; but when we reached it and rode through its streets, it was like all other cities across Turkey: up close they lose their beauty.

*Menschen und dürres Vieh. So gleicht hier eine Stadt der anderen.*<sup>44</sup> (May, 1892c, 550)

Jehart significantly expanded and changed the last two sentences of the description: "Capinsko oblečeni in umazani ljudje lenarijo po ulicah in pred hišami, kot bi na vsem svetu za nje ne bilo dela. Mršave buše, sloke koze so za ozadje. Balkansko mesto —!"<sup>45</sup> (May, 1931–1932, 524). In addition to a more negative description of the town's inhabitants, the last sentence claims that this is a typical Balkan town, whereas the statement in the original may refer to a narrower area. Mrzel used the opposite strategy: the reference to 'Oriental' houses is narrowed to Turkish houses, and the penultimate sentence of the source text is changed so as not to state anything negative about people or livestock, but merely observe that the pavement is neglected: "Po sredi ulice je potekal največkrat zanemarjen tlak iz mačjih glav. Tako je v teh krajih mesto podobno mestu"<sup>46</sup> (May, 1971b, 426).

When Kara Ben Nemsi asks the public prosecutor in Ostromdscha where two notorious Albanian highwaymen – brothers known by the collective *nom de guerre* Aladschy – were from, the latter offers the following information: "Man sagt, sie seien oben von Kakandelen [sic] her, von den Bergen des Schar Dagħ herab, wo die eingefleischten Skipetaren wohnen"<sup>47</sup> (May, 1892d, 60–61). In the first translation, Albanians are described as wild: "Pravijo, da sta iz Tetova, s Šar planine. Tam živijo najdivjejši Škipetarji"<sup>48</sup> (May, 1932a, 66). In the retranslation, no adjective is used: "Pravijo, da sta menda gori iz Kakandelen [sic], iz hribov Šardaga, kjer živijo Albanci"<sup>49</sup> (May, 1971c, 52). In a lengthy passage in the source text, Kara Ben Nemsi talks about the lack of protection from robbers like the Aladschy that Ottoman law provides to people (May, 1892d, 222); the following statement is added in the first translation: "Pri vas pa se za postavo nihče ne zmeni,

žal pogosto niti oblasti ne. Saj so celo vaši politični uradniki in policijski predstojniki zavezniki roparjev in zločincev, kakor sem prav v Strumici doživel"<sup>50</sup> (May, 1932a, 230). In the retranslation, the passage from the original is omitted altogether (May, 1971c, 175). The narrator had previously made the following pronouncement about the Albanian people and the lands they inhabit:

*Die türkische Rechtspflege hat bekanntlich ihre Eigentümlichkeiten, sagen wir geradezu ihre Schattenseiten, die um so deutlicher hervortreten, je entlegener die Gegend ist, um die es sich handelt. Unter den dortigen Verhältnissen ist es nicht zu verwundern, daß da, wo die verschiedenen zuchtlosen, sich ewig befehlenden Stämme der Arnauten ihre Wohnsitze haben, von einem wirklichen 'Rechte' fast gar nicht gesprochen werden kann. [/] Bei Ostromdscha beginnt das Gebiet dieser Skipetaren, welche nur das eine Gesetz kennen, daß der Schwächere dem Stärkeren zu weichen hat.*<sup>51</sup> (May, 1892d, 1)<sup>52</sup>

In the first translation, the passage is rewritten to paint an even somewhat more negative picture of both the Albanians and the Ottoman authorities:

*Dežela Škipetarjev se začneja pri Strumici in sega čez Vardarsko dolino in Šar planino v Albanijo. Domovina Škipetarjev je gorata, težko dostopna, Škipetarji sami so bojevita plemena in so si neprestano v laseh. Krvna osveta je pri njih stroga verska dolžnost, roparski pohodi, napadi na sosede in na tujce veljajo za junaške čine. Politično spada njihova dežela sicer pod Turčijo, pa podložni so padišahu le po imenu, za turške oblasti se ne zmenijo, te pa jih pustijo pri miru, ker jim v njihovih gorskih gnezdih ne morejo do živenga in ker se*

44 The town – at least what we saw of it now – offered nothing special. Oriental houses and huts with their windowless walls facing the street. Miserable buildings, close to collapsing. Paths of dry mud, from which terrible dust whirls up on hot days, while on rainy days one sinks knee-deep in mud. In addition to that, a gypsy-like staffage, dirty people and skinny cattle. One town is like another here.

45 Ragged and dirty people laze on the streets and in front of houses, as if there were no work for them in the whole world. Meagre cows and slimmish goats as staffage. A Balkan town!

46 The middle of the street was paved with mostly neglected cat's head cobbles. Thus, in these parts, one town is like another.

47 It is said that they are from up in Kalkandelen, below the Sharr Mountains, where deep-rooted Skipetars dwell.

48 It is said that they are from Tetovo, from the Sharr Mountains. The wildest Skipetars live there.

49 It is said that they are supposedly from Kalkandelen, from the Sharr Mountains, where Albanians live.

50 In your country, no one cares about the law, often not even the authorities, unfortunately. Even your political officials and police chiefs are allied with robbers and criminals, as I experienced in Strumica.

51 It is commonly known that the Turkish administration of justice has its peculiarities, let us put it bluntly, its downsides, which become all the more apparent the more remote the area in question is. Under the conditions there, it is not surprising that in the parts where the various insubordinate, constantly warring Arnaut tribes have their abodes, one can hardly speak of any actual "law". [/] The territory of these Skipetars, who only know the law that the weaker has to give way to the stronger, begins near Ostromdscha.

52 The slash sign [/] represents the end of a paragraph.

*jih bojijo. Po nekod so še celo v zvezi z njimi. Le eno oblast poznajo Škipetarji, oblast pesti, slabejši se mora umakniti močnejšemu.*<sup>53</sup> (May, 1932a, 5)

Mrzel translated the first sentence of the original, while the other quoted sentences from the source text are not to be found in the target text and are replaced by merely one sentence: "Turški pravni red ima, kakor je znano, svoje posebnosti ali – povejmo kar naravnost – svoje senčne strani, ki so toliko razločnejše vidne, kolikor bolj odmaknjeni so kraji, ki zanje gre. To smo bili že popoldne izkusili in zdaj smo trdno sklenili, da bomo na razpravi, na katero smo bili namenjeni, nastopili odločno"<sup>54</sup> (May, 1971c, 5).

Further shifts regarding the Albanian people occur in the part of the narrative where the protagonist's travelling party is approaching the Albanian ethnic territory. The narrator states the following in the original: "Und grad jetzt näherten wir uns dem gefährlichen Bereich der Skipetaren"<sup>55</sup> (May, 1892c, 518). Jehart translated this sentence as follows: "[B]ližali smo se krajem, kjer so neomejeno gospodovali hajduki in kačaki"<sup>56</sup> (May, 1931–1932, 494). Although both hajduks and kachaks were often associated with resistance movements, in *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika* [Dictionary of Standard Slovenian Language], the term *hajduk* is defined as either a highwayman or a rebel fighting against the Turkish occupiers, whereas the term *kačak* is only defined as (usually) an Albanian robber living in the mountains. While hajduks and kachaks were not present in the Slovenian ethnic territory, and the historical meaning of these two terms may not be well-known to the contemporary Slovenian general public, it can be presumed that in the early 1930s, many Slovenians were aware of them due to their activities in the wider region in the previous centuries and decades – some as recent as the Kachak Movement in Kosovo in the 1920s (Kryeziu & Dugolli, 2022) – and perceived them as menacing people. In the first translation, the area in question is thus described as a greater danger zone than in the original. The retranslation differs substantially: "In

ravno zdaj smo se bližali nevarnemu področju, na katerem delujejo zavezniki Žutega"<sup>57</sup> (May, 1971b, 401) – instead of referring to Albanians in general (as May did) or dangerous groups of people in the Balkans that could also be found among Albanians (as Jehart did), Mrzel thus merely mentioned a specific criminal gang.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the first Slovenian translation of the *Orientzyklus* showed that not only were almost all negative descriptions of the Balkans preserved, but that numerous interventions were made to paint an even more bleak picture of the region – either by means of additions on the sentence level, by adding sentences and whole passages, or by rewriting. The translation strategies were influenced by a variety of factors.

The Ottoman Empire, which at the time of publication of the source texts still ruled over a large part of the Balkans, is frequently criticized more harshly in the first Slovenian translations than in the originals (cf. Birk, 2014, 318–319) – in particular, the lack of the *Rechtsstaat* in the Balkans is pointed out a number of times in the translations. This is in line with the traditionally negative perception of the Turkish people among Slovenians (Bartulović, 2010; Hladnik, 2011; Pokorn, 2013; Žigon, 2013; Voje, 2014, 14–43). Not only did the Slovenian ethnic territory suffer from frequent Turkish raids in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, some of the territory that formed Yugoslavia had been under Ottoman rule as recently as before the First Balkan War, i.e. about two decades before the *Orientzyklus* was translated. It is plausible that this influenced the ideological interventions with regard to Ottoman presence in the Balkans. Emphasizing the lawlessness of days past suggested that the territory in question was better off freed from the *Osmanlı* overlords.

The Albanian people are repeatedly portrayed more negatively than in the originals, which may have been partly influenced by the less-than-stellar relations between Yugoslavia and Albania for much of the 1920s (Jovanović, 2014; cf. Steiner, 2005, 99, 267).

53 The land of the Skipetars begins at Strumica and extends through the Vardar valley and Sharr Mountains into Albania. The homeland of the Skipetars is mountainous and difficult to access, the Skipetars are warlike tribes and are constantly at daggers drawn with one another. The blood feud is a strict religious duty for them, plundering expeditions and attacks on neighbours and foreigners are considered heroic deeds. Politically, their land is part of Turkey, but they are subjects of the padishah only in name, they care little for the Turkish authorities, and these leave them be because they cannot get to them in their mountain nests and because they are afraid of them. In some places, the authorities are even allied with them. The Skipetars only know one authority, the rule of the fist; the weaker must give way to the stronger.

54 The Turkish administration of justice is known to have its peculiarities or – let us put it bluntly – its downsides, which become all the more apparent the more remote the area in question is. We had already experienced this in the afternoon, and now we firmly decided that we would act resolutely at the hearing we were about to attend.

55 And just now we were approaching the dangerous realm of the Skipetars.

56 We were approaching places where hajduks and kachaks ruled unfettered.

57 And just now we were approaching the dangerous area in which the allies of the Yellow One operated.

Anton Jehart (who translated two of the three novels that this study is primarily concerned with and was perhaps also responsible for the uncredited translation) was a Catholic priest, and denigrated the religion of Islam more often than is the case in the source texts; therefore, the fact that the Albanians were predominantly Muslim in all likelihood also influenced the portrayal of this nation in the translations. On the other hand, the mainly Orthodox Bulgarians – who are also prominently featured in the second part of the *Orientzyklus* and are frequently portrayed in a less than flattering light (Udolph, 2011, 36–38) – are never explicitly characterized more negatively than in the originals. Considering that Bulgaria had been an adversary of the Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Montenegro (i.e., two countries that later became part of Yugoslavia) in both the Second Balkan War and World War I, and that during the interwar period, there were tensions between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria regarding the territory that is today North Macedonia (Steiner, 2005, 270–271), a reasonable assumption is that the translation strategy was influenced by the circumstance that Bulgarians were Christians.

Both the 'Orient' as a whole and the Balkans in particular are also disparaged more frequently than in the originals, usually by ascribing a certain negative characteristic of a particular place or person from the source text to the wider region or its population in general in the target text. Perhaps this was done to make an even clearer distinction between Us and Them in the region (cf. Birk, 2014, 321). At the very least, the part of the Balkans once ruled by the *High Porte* was not considered part of Europe by the translator(s). This translation strategy also suggests that the translator(s) did not consider the Slovenian ethnic territory to be part of the Balkans, since otherwise, the intensified negative portrayal of the region would have reflected negatively on the Slovenian readership of the *Orientzyklus*. As Jože Pirjevec (2020, 408) notes, even about half a century before Slovenia gained independence, Slovenians already had considerable reservations about being in the same country with some of their neighbours to the south, and the way that the Balkans were presented in this translation of the *Orientzyklus* is a case in point.

Ludvik Mrzel undertook more than a dozen ideological interventions regarding various negative aspects of the Balkans that were present in the originals, but in the opposite direction than his predecessor(s): he softened the negative discourse – although he *did* preserve a substantial amount of it.

Mrzel sometimes omitted elements that portrayed Albanians in a negative way, and on one occasion also altered a passage that reflected badly upon a Montenegrin character. Since the Montenegrin people were considered one of the constituent nations of socialist Yugoslavia, and Albanians were recognized as one of the national minorities (they formed the majority in the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo), Mrzel's interventions can be understood as acting in accordance with Yugoslavia's slogan of *brotherhood and unity*. On the other hand, while Mrzel did not intensify the frequent negative portrayal of Bulgarians, he also did not soften it – this strategy is in line with the strained relations between the two countries for much of the post-World War II period (Stamova, 2014; cf. Roudometof, 2002; quoted in Previšić, 2016, 84).

Shifts with regard to religion also occurred in Mrzel's translations. Most prominently, the translator omitted passages that champion Christianity (Birk, 2014, 319), but he also changed a passage that reflected badly upon Islam. In addition to the majority of Albanians being adherents of this religion, the translations were published in 1971, i.e., the year that Muslims (present-day Bosniaks) were officially recognized as one of Yugoslavia's constituent nations (Christia, 2008, 476). It is therefore not surprising that the translator softened the negative sentiment about the religion of a substantial part of the country's population.

Furthermore, Mrzel occasionally avoided describing the Balkans as a whole or a certain region of it in a negative manner. The biggest share of these shifts occurred in the part of the narrative taking place in Macedonia, one of the six republics of socialist Yugoslavia. This translation strategy might have been different if the novels had been translated decades later, i.e. when Yugoslavia was disintegrating or when the newly established Republic of Slovenia was attempting to disassociate itself from the Balkan region.<sup>58</sup>

58 Around the time that Yugoslavia was breaking up, Bakić-Hayden and Hayden (1992, 13) wrote the following regarding Slovenia's and Croatia's efforts the distance themselves from the rest of the country: "The parts of Yugoslavia that are not physically in the Balkans have been attempting to 'balkanize' the country (i.e., 'divide it into small, mutually hostile segments'), while blaming this development on the putative 'Balkan mentality' of those whom they wish to exclude" (Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992, 5). By the early 2000s, Slovenia largely succeeded in distancing itself from the Balkans (Lindstrom, 2003, 316). For instance, Maria Todorova's influential book, *Imagining the Balkans* (2009 [1997]), does not include Slovenia as part of the Balkans, but it does include Croatia – another country that had tried to disassociate itself from the region (cf. Lindstrom, 2003, 316). However, after Slovenia acceded to the European Union and NATO, the country began to show interest in exerting more influence in the Western Balkans (Udovič & Bučar, 2016, 1064–1066).



It can be concluded that the translation strategies for the second part of the *Orientzyklus* were similar to those used for the translation of the first part of the series, which was not set in the Balkans (Trupej, 2023): negative discourse about the Other was softened in the retranslations of the novels, whereas in the first translations, the fact that some of the nations considered the Other by the translator(s) were located in regions that were part of Yugoslavia at the time of translating did not lead to substantially less xenophobic textual interventions. The results of this case study support the retranslation hypothesis, since in the more recent translations there were fewer shifts than in the older ones. However, as

Pekka Kujamäki (2001, 65) notes, the reason for a certain literary work being retranslated is not necessarily a desire to have a more 'faithful' translation; rather, the reason is that norms in the target culture have changed. The Slovenian retranslation of the *Orientzyklus* is an example of this. Neither translation of the series supports the theory that foreignization tends to be used when translating into peripheral languages, since numerous ideological interventions were found in both sets of target texts. The fact that these were more frequent in the first translation of the *Orientzyklus* can perhaps serve as an incentive for further research on the influence of ideology on literary translation in interwar Slovenia.

UPODOBITEV BALKANA V SLOVENSKIH PREVODIH SERIJE  
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## POVZETEK

Podoba Balkana v dveh slovenskih prevodih serije *Orientzyklus* je dokaj različna. V prevodih romanov, ki so pri katoliško usmerjeni založbi Tiskarna sv. Cirila izšli med obema vojnoma, negativen prikaz različnih vidikov Balkana ni zgolj ohranjen, temveč nemalokrat celo intenziviran. S spremembami besedila oz. dodanim besedilom je večkrat poudarjeno predvsem to, da naj bi bil Balkan pod Osmanskim cesarstvom območje brezvladja. Albanski narod je prav tako prikazan v precej bolj negativni luči kot v izvirnikih, kar je bilo v skladu z razmeroma napetimi odnosi med Jugoslavijo in Albanijo v drugem desetletju 20. stoletja. Na negativen prikaz je verjetno vplivalo tudi dejstvo, da so Albanci večinsko muslimanske veroizpovedi; pravoslavni Bolgari denimo nikdar niso bili upodobljeni bolj negativno kot v izvirnih besedilih, čeprav so bili jugoslovanski odnosi z Bolgarijo v zadevnem obdobju prav tako dokaj problematični. Tudi islam je nekajkrat prikazan v bolj negativni luči kot v izvirnikih, še pogosteje pa to velja za Balkan kot celoto, kar bi utegnilo odražati slovenski odnos do te regije v obdobju med obema vojnoma. V ponovnih prevodih, ki so na začetku 70. let prejšnjega stoletja izšli pri Mladinski knjigi, so bili prevajalski posegi manj pogosti, kadar so bili izvedeni, pa so bili diametralno nasprotni tistim v prvih prevodih. Negativna podoba Balkana je bila do neke mere omiljena, pri čemer so bili posegi v besedilo pogosti predvsem v delih zgodbe, ki se odvija na ozemlju današnje Severne Makedonije, saj je bilo to ozemlje za časa nastanka prevodov del Jugoslavije. V nekoliko bolj pozitivni luči je prikazan tudi albanski narod, ki je bil v Jugoslaviji številčno zastopan.

**Ključne besede:** Karl May, *Orientzyklus*, Balkan, književno prevajanje, orientalizem, nemška književnost

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