

## On the Oriental Lexicon in the Serbian Language<sup>1</sup>

Prvoslav Radić

### Abstract

Although the links between the Serbian and Oriental languages date back far in history, they distinctly marked the period of Ottoman domination in the Balkans, i.e. the period since the 14th century. The most abundant Turkish linguistic traces have remained along the main strategic lines of Ottoman expansion (Thrace—Macedonia—south Serbia—the Raška region—Bosnia and Herzegovina); migrations of the Serb population contributed to their wide reach by disseminating Turkish loanwords far from central Balkan areas. The contacts between the Serbian and Turkish languages occurred in a broad sociolinguistic range dictated by Ottoman conquerors (terminology related to state administration, army, judicial system, commerce, cookery, etc.).

*Key words: Serbian language, orientalisms, balkanization, standardization, purism.*

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## I. On Ancient Linguistic Links with Turanian Peoples

It is a well-known fact that the Slavs have gravitated towards the East and the peoples of the East from the earliest times. This tendency has largely been a result of the specific geographic distribution of the Slavs. The Proto-Slavic Indo-European dialect presumably acted as a link between eastern and western Indo-European groups. Linguistic palaeontology (archaeology) reveals that the religious terminology of the Slavs was similar to that of the Indo-Iranians and particularly the Iranians (cf. Old Russ. *богъ, святъ, слово*: Old Iran. *bagā, spenta, sravah*). On the other hand, the lexical correspondence between Proto-Slavic and western Indo-European languages clearly reveals the predominance of terms related to domestic economy which frequently denote technical tools (Трубейкој 2004: 86). Having in mind that the Slavs were divided between the East and West, N. Trubetskoy highlights that the Slavs were initially drawn by their soul towards the eastern Indo-Europeans, while their body drew them towards the western Indo-Europeans due to specific geographic and material circumstances of living (Ibidem: 89).

Nevertheless, the Slavs also established links with non-Indo-European peoples of the East. The oldest and the most complex relations include those with the numerous Turanian (Turanic, Turkic) peoples, members of the large Ural-Altai language family. The links between the Proto-Slavic and Turanian tribes, the Avars and the Huns, were presumably established already between the 3rd and 7th centuries, as evidenced by Turanian lexical traces (or those lexical features adopted through the Turanian language) in Slavic languages—e.g. Serb. *čaša* ('cup'), *knjiga* ('book'), *kovčeg* ('chest'), *krčag* ('pitcher'), *sablja* ('sabre'), or *kraguj* ('a bird species, griffon vulture'), *šaran* ('a fish species, carp'), *ševar* ('a marsh plant species, typha') (cf. Москов 1981: 83). The migrations of the Slavs from Pannonia towards the Balkans and Constantinople (Slav. *Tsarigrad*) in the 6th and 7th centuries were a part of a wider migration movement in which the Slavs were accompanied by the Avars (Slav. *Obri*), who were presumably assimilated by the more numerous Slavs over the following centuries. The name of this Eastern people has been preserved in Serbian toponyms such as *Obrovac* (Serbia, Croatia), *Obarska* (Republic of Srpska) (cf. Ćorović), while a number of words

like *ban*, *župan* ('ruler titles'), or *klobuk* ('a hat type') (Срок 1992: 85) bear reminiscence of the Avaro-Slavic period.

The links between the Slavs and Turanian peoples continued through Turanian Proto-Bulgarians, who had originated in the Volga River valley and whose ethnic groups took part in the alliance with the Avars. In 679, these Bulgarians swiftly conquered the Slavic population of the eastern Balkans and created a powerful Bulgarian state. Although their fate was to eventually be assimilated by the local Slavic population, along with their ethnic name *Bugari* (Bulgarians) and some anthroponyms (e.g. *Boris*, *Krum*), their legacy to the Balkans includes a number of appellatives, such as the Serbian words *beleg* ('landmark'), *beočug* ('shackle'), *bubreg* ('kidney'), *pašenog* ('co-brother-in-law'), *tojaga* ('bludgeon').<sup>2</sup> In the ages to follow, other, less known peoples of Turanian origin roamed through some parts of the Balkans, leaving behind their linguistic traces. For example, the Cumans and the Pechenegs, whose presence in some Balkan areas dates back to the 12th century (Мирчев 1963: 74), imprinted their ethnonyms in the toponymy of Serbia (cf. *Kumane* in Banat, *Pečenjevce* in Jablanica).

Although scarce in quantity, these early Turanian lexical deposits cover a broad semantic range in the Serbian language: from names for body parts (*bubreg*), through words indicating family relations (*pašenog*), ruler's titles (*ban*, *župan*), terms related to plant and animal life (*ševar*; *kraguj*, *šaran*), to those denoting various objects (*beočug*, *čaša*, *klobuk*, *knjiga*, *kovčeg*, *krčag*, *sablja*, *tojaga*). The nature of these influences most probably reveals elements of the symbiotic processes between the Slavs and the Turanian tribes in certain historical periods.

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2 Certain Proto-Bulgarian lexemes, as well as lexemes adopted through Proto-Bulgarian, were recorded in Old Slavic texts, e.g. *bōbrēgъ*, *bělъčugъ*, *bělēgъ*, *pašenogъ* (Popović 1960: 609; cf. Москoв 1981: 92–94). The suffix *-čii* probably belongs to this group in the category of *nomina agentis*, e.g. *кѣнигѣчѣи*, *sokačii* (Мирчев 1963: 74).

## II. The Turkish (Ottoman) Period in the Balkans (14th–19th centuries)

1. In the 14th century, another Turanian warrior tribe, the Ottoman Turks, reached the Balkans. Being better organized, the Ottomans left a stronger and a more lasting imprint throughout the Balkans, significantly changing the course of Balkan history and culture. The contacts between Serbian and Turkish occurred in a wide sociolinguistic range imposed by Ottoman conquerors. Turkish loanwords were being adopted in the process of establishing new social and economic relations, instituting a new administration (state administration, army, the judicial system), offering or imposing the Islamic religion and education, but also through bilingualism in certain areas (due to the colonization of the Turkish population), a particular form of patriarchal life, education of Serbian-speaking Muslims in Turkey, the popularity of Turkish folk poetry, etc.<sup>3</sup> The earliest records of Turkish loanwords in the Serbian language date back to the 15th century (Skok 1935; Stachowski 1967: 73–76), while the most abundant linguistic traces have remained along the main strategic lines of the Ottoman expansion: Thrace—Macedonia—south Serbia—the Raška region (Sandžak)—Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>4</sup> Towards the northwest, Turkish loanwords also reached distant areas, such as Dalmatia, Slavonia, Slovenia, etc. Migrations of the Serbs largely contributed to this process by disseminating Turkish loanwords far from the central Balkan areas. The Serbs who massively emigrated to Hungary (e.g. to Buda, Pest, Szentendre) since the late 17th century due to Ottoman terror (cf. the Great Migration of the Serbs, 1690) would widen their outreach far towards the north.

A typical example of the situation in Serbian literature in Hungary is the opus of Gavril Stefanović Venclović (ca. 1680–1749), a preacher and writer, translator and orator from Szentendre, who arrived in north

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3 Kazazis (1972: 91) seeks to find reasons for this in literature and present them systematically from a Balkan perspective.

4 Numerous Arabic and Persian, but also Latin and Greek words were adopted in the Serbian language through Turkish.

Hungary as a young man on the wave of the Serbian migration of 1690. His handwritten miscellanies in a vernacular dialect abound in folklore elements (e.g. proverbs and adages), while in the rich folk vocabulary of the what was then a Serbo-Hungarian territory, numerous Turkish loanwords can be found, such as *beričet* ('abundance'), *fajda* ('benefit'), *pazar* ('market'), *pendžer* ('window'), etc. (Јовановић 1911: 105–306). The writings of Gavril Stefanović Venclović show that Turkish suffixes were increasingly becoming independent from Turkish derivative words and the practice of adding them to non-Turkish (Serbian) roots was becoming common: cf. *grabdžija* ('the one who seizes other people's property, the one who grabs'—"grabi"), *opaklija* ('an evil man'—"opak"), *zločestluk* ('the quality of being evil'—"zločest") (Радић 1990: 399–405). This also reveals the formation processes of individual stylistic and semantic components in such hybrids and shows that they were predominantly conversational in character. Accordingly, low-style literature, which was intended for a broad folk population, opened wide the doors for vernacular linguistic features, including Turkish loanwords. No matter how paradoxically it may sound, the use of loanwords in the popular Serbian literature of the time was in a way an agent of 'democratization' in the culture of the Serbs. For the most part of Ottoman rule, Serbian high-style literature remained enclosed within the medieval idiom of the literary language, which remained hardly penetrable for vernacular linguistic features and Turkish loanwords. However, in the 18th century, the Metropolitan of Sremski Karlovci (Karlowitz) Stefan Stratimirović and other Serbian intellectuals made strong opposition to Turkish loanwords, striving to prevent the estranging of the Serbs from European culture and civilization (cf. Popović 1983: 51).<sup>5</sup>

In Balkan languages, Turkish loanwords have spanned a broad semantic range and it is noteworthy that in Bosnia even notions like 'man' and 'animal' are denoted by Turkish terms: *hinsan*, *hajvan* (Popović 1960: 610). The Ottoman presence in the Balkans left a particularly strong imprint on the urban civilization and this is evidenced in numerous vocation ("zanati") names, which are in fact Turkish lexemes that belong to the

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5 Another lexical deposit—Russian (i.e. Russo-Slavonic), which powerfully splashed Serbian culture at the very same time, was not considered a danger.

*nomina agentis* category (cf. fn. 2): *abadžija* ('tailor or weaver'), *bakardžija* ('coppersmith'), *čibugdžija* ('chibouk maker'), *čerpidžija* ('adobe maker'), *halvedžija* ('person who makes or sells halvah'), *kalajdžija* ('whitesmith'), *kečedžija* ('felt hat maker'), *kundurđija* ('shoemaker'), *luledžija* ('pipe maker'), *mumdžija* ('candlemaker'), *mutabdžija* ('person who makes or sells articles made of goat's hair'), *safundžija* ('soap maker'), *šecerđija* ('candymaker'), *taždžija* ('stonemason'), *tufegdžija* ('gun smith'), *tutundžija* ('tobacconist'), etc. Food-related, tailoring, music and military vocations, as well as those related to state administration, were particularly numerous among them. In the economic sphere, cities were becoming increasingly prestigious even among urban populations whose mother tongue was not Turkish (cf. Kazazis 1972: 91). Therefore, the economic prestige of the city must have also been reflected in the urban idiom—an idiom abounding in Turkish loanwords.<sup>6</sup>

2. The Serbian uprising against the Ottoman rule in the Belgrade Pashalik in the early 19th century (1804, 1815) was accompanied by endeavours to create a modern Serbian literary language. The key role in the latter activity was played by the Serbian philologist and language reformer Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864). In his reform, the authentic vernacular language was taken as the only foundation for a literary language. Karadžić assumed a cautious and rational approach in dealing with foreign lexical deposits and especially Turkish loanwords. Although a vast number of Turkish lexical borrowings appeared in his *Srpski rječnik* (*The Serbian Dictionary*, Vienna 1818), the author carefully assessed their place in the lexical system. The way in which he arranged numerous Serbo-Turkish lexical doublets in the dictionary—such as *kožuar* / *ćurčija* ('furrier'), *krojač* / *terzija* ('tailor'), *kuvar* / *aščija* ('cook'), *pastir* / *čobanin* ('shepherd'), *puškar* / *tufekčija* ('gun smith'),

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6 However, the dating of the process has not been substantially explored in Serbian studies. In the Toplica region (Serbia) a semantic distinction between the Slavic lexeme *ložica* and Turkish *kašika* has persisted almost until the present day. The former lexeme designates a 'spoon made of metal', whereas the latter designates a 'spoon made of wood' (Радић 2010: 256). This renders relative the concept of urban prestige, i.e. it definitely does not make it absolute.

*zlatar / kujundžija* ('goldsmith') (cf. Ивић 1966: 154–155), reveals a tendency to favour the Serbian form: e.g. *ćurčija* "cf. *kožuar*," *terzija* "cf. *krojač*," *aščija* "vide *kuvar*," *čobanin* "cf. *pastir*," *tufekčija* "cf. *puškar*," *kujundžija* "vide *zlatar*," etc. He would retain the same principle in the second edition of his dictionary (cf. Радић 2001: 166–175), and the same approach would be nurtured in later Serbian lexicographic works. Although the national revival and the Romanticist enthusiasm were in full flow, Karadžić did not depart from a rational approach (moderate purism) in dealing with Turkish loanwords. As he was of the common-folk origin and was not overly concerned about foreign literary influences (cf. fn. 5), Karadžić showed a certain degree of tolerance for Turkish lexical borrowings, all the more because they had become deeply enrooted in the Serbian language over the centuries.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, after the Serbo-Turkish War (1876–78), the migrations from the south and east, i.e. from the areas under Ottoman domination, ensured a constant influx of Serbs, Macedonians and Bulgarians, as well as Aromanians, Jews and other, often bilingual populations into the liberated, politically independent and economically prosperous Serbia, and particularly into its urban centres. Along with their dialects (and languages), these populations would bring fresh deposits of Turkish loanwords,<sup>8</sup> as substantially evidenced by the literary and theatrical life of the major towns in Serbia at that time (S. Sremac, B. Stanković).

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7 In seeking to explain the reasons for the deep-rootedness of Turkish loanwords in the Serbian language, Škaljić (1979: 14) draws attention to the fact that during Ottoman domination, Turkish words were neither systematically imposed, nor were they perceived as offensive to the linguistic sensibility of the local population.

8 This process would continue throughout the 20th century, though under considerably different political circumstances: the population would again pour from border regions towards Serbia's central areas. For example, in the periods when the Suiptar separatism was on the rise in Kosovo and Metohija (Serbia's southern autonomous province) and southern Serbia, during the rule of Josip Broz Tito and particularly after the NATO occupation of Kosovo and Metohija (1999), Serbs migrated in large numbers towards central Serbia.

However, this period was marked by the intense nation-formation process among the Serbs which relied on a different distribution of political power in the Balkans and altered civilizational boundaries. The suppression of Ottoman domination in the Balkans in the late 19th century and the definitive expulsion of the Ottomans in the early 20th century resulted in the withdrawal of Turkish loanwords, which followed the incorporation of this region into a different, already largely European civilization context. Soon after the establishment of the new Serbian state, the Turkish terminology related to the state, military and civil organization and administration was suppressed. For example, it (again) became common in the Serbian language to use the word *krojač* (/ Ger. *šnajder*) instead of *abadžija* ('tailor'), *okrug* instead of *nahija* ('district'), *puškar* instead of *tufegdžija* ('gun smith'), *sudija* instead of *kadija* ('judge'), *trgovac* instead of *dućandžija* ('merchant'), *zlatar* instead of *kujundžija* ('goldsmith'), etc. On the linguistic plane, certain sociolinguistic mechanisms could come to the fore, due to which Turkish loanwords were turning into signs of the surviving epically patriarchal times, but also into a symbol of the Oriental conqueror expelled from the Balkans (see III. 1). In the late 19th century, the so-called philological school, which favoured a purist approach, gained prevalence among Serbian scholars. Among other things, the representatives of this approach strove to purge many foreign words—and especially Turkish lexical borrowings—and replace them with Serbian words—for example, they sought to make common in usage *lađa* ('boat') instead of *đemija*, *prijateljstvo* ('friendship') instead of *dostluk*, *prozor* ('window') instead of *pendžer*, etc. However, it was also intended to replace some already established Turkish loanwords, such as *bakar* ('copper'), *jastuk* ('pillow'), *kašika* ('spoon'); the proposed substitutes were *med*, *uzglavica* (/ *uzglavlje*), *ožica* (/ *lažica*) (Okuka 2006: 40). Purist interventions in this period should be subject to detailed study, though there is still no agreement among scholars as to whether there was a purist approach towards Turkish loanwords in Balkan languages or not. In his analysis of the attitudes of various scholars, and particularly Petar Skok, on the purist movements that emerged after the formation of free Balkan states, K. Kazazis (1972: 91–92) writes: "It is, however, somewhat of a surprise to hear Skok (1935, p. 251) say that he knows of no puristic tendencies in the Balkans directed against Turkisms."



### III. Turkish Loanwords and the “European” Balkans in the 20th and the Early 21st Century

1. At the beginning of the 20th century there was yet another wave of Serbian pro-European intellectuals who perceived the Ottoman cultural legacy as an obstacle to Serbia’s pro-European orientation. This is probably best exemplified by the critical assessment of Stevan Sremac’s (1855–1906) literary works presented by Jovan Skerlić, a Serbian literary critic. Sremac’s works often featured themes related to south Serbia. It was probably no coincidence that Skerlić ironically used an abundance of Turkish loanwords in his critical review of Stevan Sremac’s opus (1909): “In his stories—Skerlić writes—there are too many *aščinice*, shanty taverns, cellars, *kafane*, *mehane* and inns [...] His subjects include ‘*krkanluci*’ and fuddles of ‘*đuveč-kardaš*’” (Скерлић 1964а: 300, italicized by P.R.). Being enthusiastically pro-European, Skerlić apparently fell short in understanding the political and cultural dilemmas that had persisted in the Balkans, divided between the East and West, at least since the Ottoman conquest of Byzantium.<sup>9</sup>

However, due to Turkey’s long presence in the Balkans, Turkish lexical borrowings became permanently part of the Serbian language heritage; there are still thousands of them in the folk language,<sup>10</sup> and a significant share of these words are also found in the literary language. Not many Serbs of an average education know that the words such as *bašta* (‘garden’), *boja* (‘colour’), *čarapa* (‘sock’), *česma* (‘fountain’), *čizma* (‘boot’), *dugme* (‘button’), *džep* (‘pocket’), *ekser* (‘nail’), *jastuk* (‘pillow’), *kašika* (‘spoon’), *makaze* (‘scissors’), *marama* (‘kerchief’), *rakija* (‘brandy’), *sat* (‘clock, hour’), *šećer* (‘sugar’), *top* (‘cannon’), etc. are of Turkish origin. Nowadays, it is impossible (or mostly impossible)

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9 Already the last Byzantine emperor, when put in a position to choose between these influences as an external threat to the state, chose the East and not the West (“Better the Sultan’s turban than the cardinal’s hat”). The same idea was later repeated in a Serbian folk proverb (“It is better to be threatened by the sword of a Turk than by the pen of a German”).

10 The edition of Škaljić’s dictionary cited in this paper has 8742 words and phrases.

to find appropriate equivalents for these words among lexemes of Slavic origin. Due to this, they will certainly persist in the Serbian language. The share of Turkish loanwords in *The Dictionary of the Serbo-Croatian Literary Language* of Matica Srpska (*Rečnik srpskohrvatskoga književnog jezika*, Novi Sad, 1967–76) shows not only their persistent presence in the Serbian literary language but also their ramification and revitalization. A significant number of these words enrich the vocabulary of modern media, though in many cases they appear as archaisms and historicisms. Examples from Serbian media include “*arčiti* imovinu” (*RTS 1*, Belgrade, 29 Oct. 2013), “*Miloševićevi čauši*” (*Glas javnosti*, Belgrade, 15 Feb. 1999, p. 5), “*janičarski prevrat*” (*Blic*, Belgrade, 17 Jun. 1998, p. 2), “*izaći na megdan*” (*Večernje novosti*, Belgrade, 24 Feb. 2004, p. 4), “*Andrija tobdžija*” (title, *Večernje novosti*, Belgrade, 24 Feb. 2004, p. 48), “*uzdržati se od šenluka*” (*Blic*, Belgrade, 15 Jan. 2004, p. 11), “*šiptarski zulum*” (*TV Palma plus*, Jagodina, 28 Jun. 1999), etc. Under the influence of the colloquial style, Turkish loanwords became widely used in film subtitle translations (cf. “*kavgadžija*”: Eng. *trouble maker*, film *Samson and Delilah*), TV programme titles (“*Kuhinjski kalfa*,” *RTS 1*, Belgrade, 2013) or quizzes (“The Serbian four-letter word for flaw?”—answer: “*mana*,” *TVBK*, Belgrade, 18 Apr. 2004). They also appear in the names of (small) streets (“*Čumićevo sokače*,” “*Čkaljino sokače*,” Belgrade), restaurants (e.g. “*Kafanica Trg*,” Belgrade), websites (“*www.e-ducana.com*.”), billboard ads (“*Veče sevdaha*,” Belgrade, 6 Nov. 2013), etc.

It is obvious that in most of these examples, Turkish loanwords are used as a stylistic means intended to express an intensified emotional relation. Although some of them imply an affirmative meaning and the glow of the so-called good old times (e.g. *ducana* ‘store’, *kafan(ica)* ‘tavern’, *sevdah* ‘lovesickness’, *sokače* ‘small street’), a significant number of them denote the atmosphere of an exhausted and outmoded period; accordingly, their function is to express an ironic, pejorative and even vulgar meaning (*arčiti* ‘waste’, *čauš* ‘servant’, *janičar* ‘Janissari’, *megdan* ‘duel’, *šenluk* ‘wild celebration’, *zulum* ‘oppression’, etc.). However, their connotational values are usually more complex and in various ways innovative in ideological and political contexts, as evidenced, for example, in Bosnian Serbs’ media and their reports on the conflict with

Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina (cf. *jurišlija* ‘Muslim assault warrior’, *džihadlija* ‘Jihad warrior’) (Радић 2001: 190).<sup>11</sup>

2. The desire to Europeanize themselves imposed on the Serbs the need to make a distance towards various deposits of Turkish culture and civilization and establish stronger cultural bonds with the West, and, at a regional level, with the Croats and Slovenes. However, the Croats sought to place the relationship with the Serbs in the context of the inter-Balkan East vs. West polarization. Already at the beginning of the 20th century, the Croatian poet Milan Begović, who probably relied on the Austro-Hungarian political approach,<sup>12</sup> wrote that the spirit of the Serbs bore an imprint of an Oriental culture, whereas the Croatian spirit was marked by Western culture; this idea was opposed by Serbian intellectuals (cf. Скерлић 1964б: 95). Although the Croatian literary language (i.e. the literary language used by the Croats) developed in the ethno-linguistic territory of the Serbs, the hard-line purist methods used in its standardization and the attitude that there was no (such a) language policy in the Serbian literary language were aimed at creating an impression of the distinctiveness of the Croatian (literary) language. Between the two world wars, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Croatian linguists undertook a broad range of activities under the pretext of protecting themselves

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11 When the sentence „Belaj u Srebrenicu dolazi sa strane“ [Misfortune comes to Srebrenica from the outside] (*Politika*, Belgrade, 27 Apr. 2007) appears in a news title, then the used Turkish loanword *belaj* (‘misfortune, trouble’) is probably meant to draw attention to the threat posed by the Islamic (and primarily Turkish) fundamentalism in the political crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, in the phrase „Rusija u jagmi za arktičkim blagom“ [Russia’s rush for Arctic treasures] (*Politika*, Belgrade, 20 Aug. 2011), which appears in another news title, *Rusija* (Russia) and the Turkish loanword *jagma* (‘rush, demand’) are brought into relationship in a negative context probably with the intention of triggering an association of the East.

12 Austria-Hungary’s attitude towards the Serbs as “Oriental primitives” was intended to justify its territorial aspirations towards Serb-populated areas, as well as the genocide against the Serbs in World War I (an evidence-supported account of this was presented already by Archibald Reiss).

from Belgrade's centralism;<sup>13</sup> these included the identification of Turkish loanwords as “Serbian” lexical borrowings, as opposed to “Croatian” words (e.g. *đumrugđžija* : *carinik* ‘customs officer’; *kovandžija*: *pčelar* ‘bee-keeper’; *lelek* (/ *štrk*): *roda* ‘stork’). Serbian linguists drew attention to the misconceptions underlying this approach (cf. Белић 1998: 134–141).

In the Croatian linguistic policy of the fascist period, under the so-called Independent State of Croatia, Turkish loanwords, as well as all other lexical borrowings, were identified with Serbian loanwords and there was a tendency to interpret them as instruments in an organized campaign aimed at suppressing the Croatian national identity. According to Mile Budak, the chief ideologue of the Ustaša movement in the Independent State of Croatia, the Serbs used words of Turkish origin with the idea of replacing good Croatian expressions and endowing them with the characteristics of the Serbian language: The Serbs “brought every kind of barbarisms, especially Turkish loanwords, in order to eliminate good Croatian expressions and give to the language a predominantly Serbian character” (quoted after Okuka 2006: 203). From the perspective of the Croatian language policy, Turkish loanwords became a strong Serbian linguistic marker, second only to the Serbian Cyrillic script. Together with the Cyrillic script (the Oriental syndrome?!),<sup>14</sup> Turkish loanwords were claimed to be the greatest obstacle to the Croatian national identity. Even after World War II, Croatian linguists assumed an almost identical attitude towards Turkish loanwords, though the topic was discussed within the context of the common “Serbo-Croatian” language (cf. Jonke 1965: 405–407).

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13 When writing about the prestige of the “Belgrade standard” in Yugoslavia, which contributed to the diffusion of Turkish loanwords towards Yugoslavia’s west, Kazazis (1972: 95) disregards the extent in which Serbs had already been present in the dialects of these areas and he particularly neglects the share of Serbs in the ethnic structure of Croatia.

14 The opposition to the Cyrillic script has been present among the Croats for centuries. Not long ago, the European general public had an opportunity to see the Croatian majority in the town of Vukovar protest vehemently and violently against the right of the Serbian ethnic minority to use the Cyrillic script in public life.

On the other hand, Serbian-speaking Muslims (Bosniaks) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the surrounding areas embraced Turkish loanwords seeking to present them as a symbol of their own literary language and national identity; this trend has particularly been pronounced after the disintegration of the former SFR Yugoslavia (cf. Okuka 2006: 312–340). Although Croatian politicians referred to them as the “flowers of the Croatian people,” the Bosniaks have striven to develop a strong linguistic distance towards their neighbours by an abundant influx of Turkish loanwords, particularly those that retain the consonant *h*, as yet another sociolinguistic marker; e.g. *bahnuti* ‘drop in’, *dohakat* ‘solve a problem’, *halal* ‘blessing’, *kahva* ‘coffee’, *lahko* ‘easy’, *mehlem* ‘balm’ (cf. Радич 2003: 115–116). Therefore, Turkish loanwords, which—in words of Alija Isaković—spread into the Balkan languages as far as the kidneys (“do *bubrega*”), are supposed to constitute a new spiritual content of the Bosniak identity. In a linguistic sense, this content should be created by restoring to use archaisms and words limited to particular dialects (mainly those from Muslim-populated areas), as well as by creating new words (e.g. *heftičnik*, vs. the words *ned(j)eljnik* and *tjednik*, used by Serbs and Croats, respectively, to denote a weekly newspaper) (cf. Okuka 2006: 319). It is a general impression that there is a greater level of agreement as regards Turkish loanwords between Serbian and Bosniak than between Bosniak and Croatian linguists. Perhaps such a situation in Serbian normative linguistics encourages the Bosniaks to undertake even more radical measures.

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Although the links between Serbian and Oriental languages date back to ancient times, they particularly strongly marked the period of Ottoman rule (15th–19th centuries).<sup>15</sup> The withdrawal of Ottoman rule from the Balkans did not imply a complete withdrawal of the Turkish population and the Turkish language. Consequently, in the 20th century, too, the Serbo-Turkish linguistic relations developed through various phases, and this process was mostly accompanied by gradual weakening

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<sup>15</sup> The Oriental deposits also include other, less strong influences, such as Jewish, Gipsy, etc.

of Turkish linguistic influences in terms of their power and range.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, a predominantly urban lifestyle, in a different, modern way, and the pressures imposed by modern globalization will probably strengthen the status of Turkish loanwords as stylistic means in certain areas of the common and literary language. The distinct stylistic shading (where the overtones of e.g. intimacy, humour, jest, underrating, ridicule, contempt, are particularly common) means that the tendency to reduce their usage to lower levels of the literary language will persist. In humorous readings, light literary genres and newspaper columns, Turkish loanwords will remain a faithful companion of the Serbian literary language, as it is already the case in the Serbian, as well as in other Balkan contexts (cf. Kazazis 1972: 95–96).

However, due to the modern way of life, the Serbian language has wider and more straightforward possibilities for civilization and cultural contacts with various peoples all over the world. Naturally, this new type of contacts does not bypass the East. Through direct or indirect means, modern communication brings into the Serbian language terms from the most distant points in the East—Japan and China. Only some of them will be mentioned here. The term *japanac*, ‘a car or some other device manufactured in Japan’, has been rather widespread, whereas *japanke*, ‘a type of slippers’, have long been in popular use. In various dialects, the term *karata* (/ sečka), ‘a hit with an open palm’, has been recorded. The word *rašomonijada*, after a film by Akira Kurosawa (*Rashomon*), is widely used in the Serbian literary language to denote ‘different and contradicting opinions’, while the term *rašomon(ac)* is used in slang to designate ‘a voyeur’ (Gerzić-Gerzić 2002). Through word play, the following words have been adopted in Serbian slang: *okinava* (/ *okinuti*, as an association to the Japanese Iceland Okinawa denotes ‘failing a grade or an exam’ and the like (cf. Imami 2000); *gejša*, means ‘1. a gay; 2. a type of bag, the so-called “pederušā”’ (a type of a men’s waist bag).

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16 Turkey’s growing economic presence in the Balkans since the late 20th century, including its political aspirations, should not be overseen. The abundant presence of Turkish series airing on Serbian TV channels is probably an indicator of this trend.

The term *harikirisati se*, ‘to perform a ritual suicide’, is also used in slang; specific sound features of Japanese and Chinese personal names are sometimes used in humorous (and lascivious) word plays. The slogan *Srbija do Tokija* (Serbia to Tokyo) was frequently used during the civil war in the SFRY.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Whether Tokyo is mentioned merely for the sake of rhyme, or it has been intended to express an archetypal relationship with the East (see chapter I)—this is a separate issue.

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Првослав Радич

## Ориентализмы в сербском языке

### Резюме

Несмотря на то, что связи сербского языка с языками Ближнего Востока достаточно давнего происхождения, они оставили особый отпечаток в периоде отоманского владычества на Балканах, т.е. с XIV века. Турецкие языковые следы больше всего сохранились вдоль главных стратегических направлений отоманского проникновения (Тракия — Македония — Южная Сербия — область Рашки — Босния и Герцеговина); миграции сербского населения содействовали значительному распространению турцизмов далеко за пределы центральных балканских областей. Контакты между сербским и турецким языками осуществлялись в широком социолингвистическом диапазоне, который диктовал отоманский завоеватель (заимствовались терминология в области государственной администрации, военной службы, судебной власти, торговли, кулинарии и пр.).

*Ключевые слова: сербский язык, ориентализмы, балканизация, стандардизация, пуризм.*