

SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS OF LINGUISTIC RELATIONS

The relations between two different linguistic communities entail the circulation, in both ways, of some lexical elements which carry cultural information specific to the respective communities. In what follows, we shall trace a few aspects of the Romanian spiritual influence in a Slavic area, more precisely, in the Bulgarian language.

It is a well-known fact that the Slavic languages borrowed numerous lexical elements from the Romanian language, from the areas of both material and spiritual cultures. Among the mythical-folkloric terms which entered the Bulgarian language, one should especially note the ones comprised in a few lexical categories: magical terms, terms which denote mythical-folkloric beings, words from the domain of traditional medicine, names of some feasts, funeral terminology, words which denote Romanian customs, etc. [1]. We shall further discuss the last category – that of the Romanian folklore customs [2].

Our paper discusses only a few Romanian customs which have become known with such words as loans on the Bulgarian territory: *călușarii* (the Calusari), the masked wassailing (*brezoaia*), *mărțișorul*.

By far, the most important Romanian custom with linguistic occurrence in the Slavic areas is that of the Calusari. An entire array of Romanian terms associated with this custom will be further presented: *kaluș*, *kalușar*, *kalușeni*, *floricika*, *mut*, *rusalija*, *vataf*.

Kaluș. It is recorded in the northern area of Bulgaria, in the phrase *Hai la kaluș* (Come to the Calusari!). Although the Bulgarian linguist Mladenov considers that the term has Greek origin, we believe that the etymologic hypothesis provided by Maria Osman-Zavera is the correct one [3], all the more as the word in question is recorded in a phrase from the ritual script of the Calusari. It was one of the main verbal formulae, used to gather the audience at the show of the Calusari.

Kalușar. In the dialect in the northern area of Bulgaria, this term signifies a member of the Calusari group, originating, undoubtedly, from the Romanian word *călușar*. The Bulgarian word *kalușar* has two derivatives: *kalușarin* (Calusar) and *kalușarski* (the Calusari's). One may note the fact that a new term denoting the *calusar* appeared in the Bulgarian linguistic area: *kalușarin*, with the suffix *-in* [4]. Let us reiterate that, on the Romanian soil, *călușar* denotes the main actant of the custom in question; in the plural (*călușari*), the word has the following meanings:

“group of dancers who, in the week of the Pentecost, perform the traditional dance named Calusari”; “the name of a folkloric dance with various steps, performed (around the Pentecost feast) by a group of young lads” [5].

Kaluşeni. The term’s etymology is to be found in the Romanian *căluşeni*, a variant of *căluşari*. The Bulgarian language did not preserve the singular form, which suggests that, for the Bulgarians, the actants group is relevant, and that they might even think that *kaluşar* is the singular. *Kaluşeni* is not so frequent a word, occurring especially among the Bulgarian ethnics who entered in contact with a Romanian community from Oltenia, where the term *căluşeni* as a variant for *căluşari* was more frequently encountered.

Floricika. In the space of the Romanian folk language, this word denotes one of the most spectacular Calusari dances; in Bulgarian, the term has the following meanings [6]:

“a song about fairies, which is sung and danced during the Pentecost week”, “the name of the dance performed by the Calusari around the sick person”.

One may notice that the Bulgarians have preserved the magical meaning, whereas, in Romania, the word has come to signify a round dance (*hora*), which proves that the loan in Bulgarian is an old one, only recording the archaic meanings of the Romanian word.

Mut. In the Romanian mythical-folkloric space, the word denotes

“the second leader of the Calusari group, who never speaks during the dance, and who, often wearing a mask and funny clothes, represents the comical character in the band” [7].

There are also other meanings, less known nowadays: “folk dance”, “wedding jester”, “devil”, (in spells), “the name of a malevolent supernatural being”. In the Bulgarian dialect, the word was transferred with the meaning “person who does not speak”. In Silistra area, it is used as a nickname for quiet people. One may also note the presence of this term in Bulgarian spells [8]. We believe that the occurrence of this word in the Calusari script has decisively contributed to its being borrowed from the Romanian language.

Rusalija. The Bulgarian word traces back to the Romanian mythical-folkloric word *rusalie*, used mainly in the plural to denote either the feast (Pentecost/ Whit Sunday) or the *iele* (wicked fairies) [9]. Maria Osman-Zavera maintains that the word has also acquired the meaning “calusar, actant in the Pentecost dances” [10] in the Bulgarian language. It is possible for this meaning, which is nevertheless infrequent, to have occurred as a result of the fact that the Calusari dance takes place during the Pentecost week; it is a rare instance in which the name of the actant comes directly from the name of the script in which he performs a ritual function.

Vataf. It also has a variant, **vatah**, in Bulgarian, and displays the following meanings: “leader of a Calusari band”, “master workman in a foundry” [11]. The latter meaning denotes a terminological transfer from the vocabulary of folklore traditions to that of the modern occupations. The term **vataf** has also a few derivatives in the Bulgarian language: *vatafin* (the same meaning as the original word), and *vatahov* (like a leader) [12]. Also particularly interesting are the toponyms and anthroponyms derived from this word: *Vatarški dol*, *Vatahova Korja*, *Vatahov* (anthroponym). As already known, in Romanian, *vătaf* is the leader of the Calusari, the one to whom their oath is presented, and also the one who disbands the group at the end of their activities.

Apart from the Calusari custom, another Romanian custom which reflects linguistically on the Bulgarian territory is the masked wassailing (the goat, the bear, the deer, *brezaia*, etc.). Among these types of wassailing, under Romanian influence, the wassailing with *brezaia* mask has been recorded in the northern areas of Bulgaria.

Brezaia. In the Bulgarian language, this word has the following meanings: “mask, masked person”, “masked person wearing carnival clothes”, “ugly woman”, “masked person during the winter feasts, especially on Christmas” [13]. Scholar V. Nestorescu also indicates another meaning of this term: “a kind of masked game recorded in the Western area of the neighbouring country” [i.e. Bulgaria] [14].

The term in question also presents two variants: *brizaia* and *br̂zaia* (*b* indicates that the preceding *r* is soft). Both variants suggest that the speakers of Bulgarian make efforts to adapt the term phonetically to their language. **Brezaia** has also given a few derivatives: *se brezaicea* (to wear a mask, to participate in *brezaie*), *bărzarin* (“actant in the Romanian-Bulgarian custom *brezaie*” [15]. This latter meaning also indicates that the Romanian custom has been completely taken over by the Bulgarians from Silistra.

Our analysis includes another kind of custom, sooner a traditional practice of welcoming spring, giving small jewellerys with a red and white cord (**mărțișor**) on March 1st.

Mărțișora. The Romanian word has suffered a change in grammatical gender under the pressure of the corresponding Bulgarian word, *martenicika*. It is not the only Romanian word with such gender alternations on the Slavic linguistic area. In Romania, the practice of giving **mărțișor** might have Thracian origins, and it is also possible that the Bulgarians, after having settled in the Balkan Peninsula, on the territory previously inhabited by the Southern Thracians, should have also taken this practice from the Thracian substratum. The Southern Slavs took over, in this case, from Romanian speakers, only the name of the instrument (**mărțișor**), which subsequently widened its meaning to denote the entire custom.

Let us briefly account for the linguistic consequences for the Bulgarian dialects that witnessed the entrance of some Romanian words with cultural information:

- the emergence of some derivatives: *bărzarin*, *vatafin*, *rusalija*, *kalușar* etc. (in some cases, one notes the existence of doublets made up of a word of Romanian origin and a Bulgarian derivative (*vataf-vatafin*);
- the emergence of new meanings on the Bulgarian territory: *rusalija* = Calusar okeși se = to give the evil eye (< oacheș), *muska* = amoulet for the superstitious people" [16];
- the emergence of toponyms and anthroponyms: *Vataški dol*, *Vatahova Korja*, *Vatahov* (anthroponym) etc.;
- the existence in the Bulgarian dialects of some phrases, syntagms and expressions definitely originating in the Romanian language: *hai la kaluș!*, *ei, drace!* [17].

To conclude, the Romanian terms entered the Bulgarian language especially in the northern area of Bulgaria and suffered various phonetic and morphological changes during the adaptation process. With regard to the mythical-folkloric terms analysed, one may note that what has been borrowed is not strictly a number of Bulgarians words, but also Romanian customs and traditional practices. Some of the loans have come to replace the Bulgarian traditional terms (*Kraciun*, *mărțișora* etc.). The word *vataf* actually entered the fundamental vocabulary of the Bulgarian language. It may be asserted, therefore, that the Romanian cultural elements and folk language prove their viability in different linguistic and spiritual contexts.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

- [1]. Nestorescu, Virgil, (2002). *Contacte lingvistice interbalcanice. Elemente românești în limba bulgară* [Inter-Balkan Linguistic Contacts. Romanian Elements in the Bulgarian Language], București: Univers Enciclopedic Publishing, p. 83-86.
- [2]. Osman-Zavera, Maria, (2002). *Raporturi lingvistice româno-bulgare* [Romanian-Bulgarian Linguistic Relations], București: Bucharest University Press, p. 68.
- [3]. *Ibidem*, p. 75.
- [4]. *Idem*.
- [5]. *** (1998). *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române* (DEX) [The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language], București: Univers Enciclopedic Publishing, p. 149.
- [6]. Nestorescu, Virgil, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
- [7]. Bălțeanu, Valeriu, (2001). *Dicționar de mitologie românească* [Dictionary of Romanian Mythology], Galați: Editura Fundației Universitare "Dunărea de Jos" din Galați, p. 141.
- [8]. Nestorescu, Virgil, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
- [9]. Bălțeanu, Valeriu, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
- [10]. Osman-Zavera, Maria, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
- [11]. *Ibidem*, p. 55.

- [12]. *Idem*.
[13]. *Ibidem*, p. 42.
[14]. Nestorescu, Virgil, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[15]. Osman-Zavera, Maria, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
[16]. *Ibidem*, p. 109, p. 113.
[17]. *Ibidem*, p. 69.

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IMPLICAȚIILE SPIRITUALE ALE RELAȚIILOR LINGVISTICE

Rezumat: *Lucrarea noastră are în vedere relațiile lingvistice româno-slave și se oprește asupra unui aspect mai puțin studiat – transferul elementelor de spiritualitate românească pe terenul slav, prin intermediul împrumuturilor lexicale. Sunt analizate câteva categorii de termeni (denumiri de obiceiuri, termeni magici, termeni medicali, denumiri de sărbători populare etc.). În măsura posibilităților, am evidențiat și modul în care aspectele de spiritualitate românească au fost integrate în context cultural străin.*

Cuvinte cheie: *relații lingvistice, spiritualitate, termeni populari.*

