

TRANSLATING THE CENTRE AND PERIPHERY: AN EXAMPLE OF FRENCH AND SERBIAN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

TRADUCEREA CENTRU ȘI PERIFERIE: UN EXEMPLU DE LITERATURĂ MEDIAVELĂ SÂRBEASCĂ ȘI FRANCEZĂ

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Abstract

This research, based on the Polysystem theory suggested by Itamar Even-Zohar, deals with two main questions: a position and a role of French medieval literature as translated literature within the literary system of Serbian/Yugoslav literature, and a position of the Serbian medieval literature as translated literature within French literary system. Results of researched repertoire of those two translated literatures defy some postulates of the Polysystem theory. Nevertheless, those two literatures have positions that are expected, i. e. a central position for the system of the French medieval literature and a peripheral one for the Serbian medieval literature as translated literature within another literary system.

Résumé

Cette recherche, basée sur la théorie des polysystèmes suggérée par Itamar Even-Zohar, traite de deux questions principales: d'abord, la position et le rôle de la littérature médiévale française en tant que littérature traduite dans le système littéraire de la littérature serbe/yougoslave, et puis, la position de la littérature médiévale serbe en tant que littérature traduite dans le système littéraire français. Les résultats des recherches de ces deux littératures traduites semblent récuser certains postulats de la théorie des polysystèmes. Néanmoins, ces deux littératures occupent des positions attendues, i. e. une position centrale pour le système de la littérature médiévale française et une position périphérique pour la littérature médiévale serbe, considérées comme des littératures traduites dans un autre système littéraire en question.

Rezumat

Această cercetare, bazată pe teoria polisistemelor sugerată de către Itamar Even-Zohar, are de-a face cu două mari chestiuni: o poziție și un rol al literaturii medievale franceze ca și literatură tradusă în cadrul sistemului literar al literaturii sârbești/iugoslave, și o poziție a literaturii medievale sârbești ca și literatură tradusă în cadrul sistemul literaturii franceze. Rezultatele repertoriului cercetat ale acestor două literaturi traduse sfidează unele axiome ale

teoriei polisistemelor. Cu toate acestea, aceste două literaturi au poziții care sunt de așteptat, adică o poziție centrală pentru literatura medievală franceză și una periferică pentru literatura medievală sârbească drept literaturi traduse în cadrul unui alt sistem literar.

Key words: *translatology, Polysystem theory, Serbian medieval literature, French medieval literature, intercultural relations*

Mots clés: *traductologie, théorie des polysystèmes, littérature médiévale serbe, littérature médiévale française, relations interculturelles*

Cuvinte cheie: *traductologie, teoria polisistemelor, literatură medievală sârbească, literatură medievală franceză, relații interculturale*

1. Introduction

The French medieval literature has been spread out of borders of today's territory of the French state and represents a significant and prolific period in the history of the European literature. All medieval literary movements and genres were already shaped: epic poems, troubadour poetry, chivalric romance, bourgeois literature, theatre, historiography, clerical literature. During that long period of time, due to specific socio-historical circumstances, the French medieval literature was ambivalent: it was written both, in Latin and in vernacular. Moreover, the French medieval literature written in vernacular was polyglossic, because both vernacular languages, Old French and Old Occitan, had numerous dialects.¹

In this paper, we will discuss the literary works written in Old French and in Old Occitan and translated into Serbian, while the French medieval literature written in Latin will be the subject of a future research.²

Many great works of art, of the French medieval literature, served as roll-models and had a considerable impact on evolution of the European literature. The French medieval literary works were translated into different languages even in the Middle Ages, which confirms that the French medieval literature was the primary literature creating new literary models to be imported into the target cultures. That influence of the French medieval literature could be seen in the Slavic medieval culture as well, because there are adaptations of some literary works, such as *Trištan i Ižota*, the Slavic version of the story of Tristan and Iseult.³

Based on the Polysystem theory, this research deals with two main questions: 1) position and a role of French medieval literature as translated literature within the literary system of Serbian/Yugoslav literature⁴; 2) position of the Serbian medieval literature as translated literature within the French literary system.

¹ For a general overview of the history of the French language see: BRUNEAU, Charles, *Petite histoire de la langue française*, 2 vol., Paris, A. Colin, 1955-1958; BRUNOT, Ferdinand, BRUNEAU, Charles, *Précis de grammaire historique de la langue française*, Paris, Masson, 1964; HERMAN, József, *Précis d'histoire de la langue française*, Budapest, 1967; HUCHON, Mireille, *Histoire de la langue française*, Paris, Librairie générale française, 2002; RICKARD, Peter, *A History of the French Language*, London, Routledge, 1989.

² For more details about the medieval literature written in Latin see: CURTIUS, Ernst Robert, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, Tübingen, Francke, 1993.

³ See: *Trištan i Ižota*, prev. Irena Grickat, Beograd, SKZ, 1966.

⁴ The term refers to the literary system in which the primary language was the Serbo-Croatian, a pluricentric South Slavic language with four mutually intelligible standard varieties. Being one of the official languages of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, since the breakup of Yugoslavia, the language separated on ethnic and political lines: Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin. For more details see: BUGARSKI, Ranko, HAWKESWORTH, Celia (eds), *Language in the Former Yugoslav Lands*, Bloomington, Slavica Publishers, 2006; GREENBERG, Robert David, *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration*, Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press, 2004; KORDIĆ, Snježana, *Serbo-Croatian*, [in: *Languages of the World/Materials*, T. 148], Munich & Newcastle, Lincom Europa, 2006; MAPPE-S-NIEDIEK, Norbert, *Die Ethno-Falle: der Balkan-Konflikt und was*

2. The Polysystem theory

The term “polysystem” was first introduced by Itamar Even-Zohar⁵. The term refers to the entire network of correlated systems (literary and extraliterary) within a single community or between communities. The polysystem theory attempts to explain “the function of *all* kinds of writing within a given culture – from the central canonical texts to the most marginal non-canonical texts” (GENTZLER, 2001, 114). Concerning the translation activity, the Polysystem theory could reveal the translation production of an entire literary system.

Itamar Even-Zohar established that the translation activity has different functions depending upon the age, strength and stability of the literary polysystem in question. He concluded that there are major and minor literary systems, which are hierarchically structured:

According to what is presumed about the nature of systems in general and the nature of literary phenomena in particular, there can obviously be no equality between the various literary systems and types. These systems maintain hierarchical relations, which means some maintain a more central position than others, or that some are primary while others are secondary. (EVEN-ZOHAR, 1978, 16)

The translated literature maintains a primary position when a target literary system is young or still developing, because the translation “fulfills the need of a young literature to use its new language for as many different kinds of writing as possible” (GENTZLER, 2001, 117). Besides, the translated literature maintains a primary position when a target literary system is peripheral, because translated texts are not only a medium for exchanging ideas, but they also offer the form of writing that could be imitated by writers in the native language. Finally, the translated literature maintains a primary position when a target system literature is weak or experiences a crisis, because “established literary models no longer stimulate the new generation of writers, who turn elsewhere for ideas and forms” (GENTZLER, 2001, 117). On the other hand, the translated literature is of secondary importance to major target literary systems. In these strong and well-developed systems, “translation often assumes forms already established as a dominant type within a particular genre” (GENTZLER, 2001, 117). In this case, the translated literature is not innovative, but rather conservative. Nevertheless, even though the translated literature preserves traditional forms, it still can introduce new ideas into the target culture.

3. French medieval literature translated into Serbian

In the Serbian culture the translation activity has always been very prolific, but the translated literature, which often maintained a primary position within the Serbian literary system, has never been systematically and thoroughly researched from the polysystem point of view⁶. France has an

Europa daraus lernen kann, Berlin, Christoph Links Verlag, 2005; THOMAS, Paul-Louis, “Le serbo-croate (bosniaque, croate, monténégrin, serbe): de l’étude d’une langue à l’identité des langues”, in: *Revue des études slaves*, 74 (2–3), 2003, p. 311–325.

⁵ The Polysystem theory has been suggested in Itamar Even-Zohar’s works in early 1970’s and afterwards established in a literary criticism in 1990’s. Even-Zohar was among pioneers who took literature for a large phenomenon and he based his theory on the Russian formalists’ research. For more details see: EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar, *Papers in Historical Poetics*, Tel Aviv, Porter Institute, 1978 [Also in: HRUSHOVSKI (HARSHAV) Benjamin and EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar (eds), *Papers on Poetics and Semiotics*, 8, Tel Aviv, University Publishing Projects, 1978]; EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar, *Polysystem Studies*, [special issue of] *Poetics Today*, 11, 1 (Spring), Durham, Duke University Press, 1990; EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar and TOURY, Gideon (eds), “Translation Theory and Intercultural Relations”, [introduction] in: *Poetics Today*, 2, 4 (Summer-Autumn), 1981. For an overview of the Polysystem theory see: GENTZLER, Edwin, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 2001.

⁶ For an overview of the French literature translated into Serbian see: *Bibliographie des ouvrages traduits en Yougoslavie de 1977 à 1986*, Belgrade, Ambassade de France, Service Culturel, 1988; CVETIČANIN, Vesna, *Francuska književnost u Srpskom književnom glasniku*, Niš, Filozofski fakultet, 2006; GLUMAC-TOMOVIĆ, Ljiljana, *Francuski klasičari na srpskohrvatskom području*, Beograd, Naučna knjiga, 1991; INJAC-MALBAŠA, Vesna, *Bibliografija francuskih dela prevedenih u Srbiji i Crnoj Gori od 1987. do 2003. godine*, Beograd, Narodna biblioteka Srbije, Francuski kulturni centar, 2004; KRSTIĆ, Nenad, *Francuska književnost u srpskim prevodima: 1775-1843*, Novi Sad, Svetovi, 1999. For an overview of the Canadian French literature translated into Serbian see: POPOVIĆ, Diana, *Kanadska frankofona književnost u srpskim prevodima*, Novi Sad, Filozofski fakultet, 2011 [unpublished PhD thesis].

important historical, political, economic and cultural roll in the Serbian cultural polysystem⁷; therefore the French literature is one of the richest sources of the translated literature within the Serbian literary system. Nevertheless, translated texts of the French medieval literature represent only a segment of translated literature within the Serbian literary system.

For this research, concerning the French medieval literature translated into Serbian, we used the COBISS system-Virtual Library of Serbia.⁸ The system is still developing; therefore the results are not conclusive. Moreover, some translations probably stay “hidden” in older literary magazines due to the former editorial custom both to omit the names of authors or translators and to change the titles of translated texts.

The French medieval author the most frequently translated into Serbian is François Villon. Villon's work had several translators, which translated extracts of his *Testaments*, as well as the full text of *Testaments*. In 1919, an extract from *Le Grand Testament*, translated by an anonymous translator, was published in the literary magazine *Dan*.⁹ *Le Grand Testament*, translated by Stanislav Vinaver, was published on several occasions (1960, 1969, 1996, 2007, 2014), and in 1972 it was also published in Braille characters.¹⁰ A bilingual edition of Villon's work, *Djelo: izvornik, prijevod, bilješke*, translated by Vojmil Rabadan, was published in 1978.¹¹ Villon's *Testaments*, extracts or full text, translated by Kolja Mićević, had several Serbian editions between 1974 and 2010.¹²

The French poet Charles d'Orléans was also frequently translated into Serbian. His work, ballades, chansons, rondeaux, translated by Kolja Mićević, was published on several occasions between 1988 and 2013.¹³ In 2004, the literary magazine *Koraci* published four poems written by Charles d'Orléans and translated into Serbian by Predrag Vertovšek.¹⁴ Poet and translator, Kolja Mićević, published both in numerous literary magazines and in five anthologies of French medieval poetry his translations of poems written by Bernart de Ventadour, Peire Vidal, Le Châtelain de Coucy, Conon de Béthune, Gace Brulé, Colin Muset, Alain Chartier, Marcabru, Eustache Deschamps, Marie de France, Jean Froissart, Guillaume de Machaut, Christine de Pizan, Guillaume

⁷ For more details about the French-Serbian cultural relations see: IBROVAC, Miodrag, *Francusko-jugoslovenski odnosi*, [S. l.], [s. n.], [s. a.]; JANJIĆ, Dušan, *Književna preplitanja: ogledi i zapisi o francusko-srpskim književnim vezama*, Beograd, Altera, 2011; PAVLOVIĆ, Mihailo, *U dvostrukom ogledalu: francusko-srpske kulturne i književne veze*, Beograd, Prosveta, 1996; RADONJIĆ, Mladen, *L'Histoire de l'amitié des Français et des Serbes*, Nouveau Belgrade, Bibliothèque Nationale “Vuk Karadžić”, 1999; VUJOVIĆ, Ana, “Društva za kulturnu saradnju između Srbije i Francuske”, in: *Nasleđe*, 23, 2012, p. 179-193.

⁸ <http://www.vbs.rs/cobiss/>

⁹ See: VILLON, François, *Iz “Grand testament”-a*, in: *Dan: časopis za literaturu i kulturne probleme*, 7-8 (oktobar 1919), Beograd, 1919, p. 117.

¹⁰ See: VIJON, Fransoa, *Veliko zaveštanje (izbor)*, prev. Stanislav Vinaver, Beograd, SKZ, 1960; VIJON, Fransoa, *Veliko zaveštanje (izbor)*, prev. Stanislav Vinaver, Beograd, Rad, 1969; VIJON, Fransoa, *Veliko zaveštanje*, prev. Stanislav Vinaver, Beograd, Narodna knjiga-Alfa, 1996; VIJON, Fransoa, *Veliko zaveštanje*, prev. Stanislav Vinaver, Narodna knjiga-Alfa, Beograd, 2007; VIJON, Fransoa, *Veliko zaveštanje (izbor)*, prev. Stanislav Vinaver, Beograd, Dereta, 2014. Edition in Braille characters: VIJON, Fransoa, *Veliko zaveštanje (izbor)*, sv. 1-2, prev. Stanislav Vinaver, Beograd, “Filip Višnjić”, 1972.

¹¹ See: VIJON, Fransoa, *Djelo: izvornik, prijevod, bilješke*, knj. 1-2, prev. Vojmil Rabadan, Zagreb, Studentski centar Sveučilišta, 1978.

¹² See: VIJON, Fransoa, *Veliko zaveštanje (završni deo)*, prev. Kolja Mićević, in: *Letopis Matice srpske*, 413, 4 (april 1974), Novi Sad, 1974, p. 387-401; VIJON, Fransoa, *Zaveštanja*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Beograd, Slovo ljubve, 1977; VIJON, Fransoa, *Zaveštanja*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Beograd, BIGZ, 1986; VIJON, Fransoa, *Balade o prolaznosti*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Beograd, Sazvežđa, 2002; VIJON, Fransoa, *Zaveštanje*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Beograd, Danteon, 2010. There are also some Villon's poems separately published in magazines and anthologies, translated by Kolja Mićević and Vladeta Košutić.

¹³ See: ŠARL ORLEANSKI, *Ronda*, prev. Kolja Mićević, in: *Koraci: časopis za književnost, umetnost i kulturu*, 23, 11/12, Kragujevac, Nova svetlost, 1988, p. 670-674; ŠARL D'ORLEAN, *Balade, šansone, ronda*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Sarajevo, Svjetlost, 1989; ŠARL ORLEANSKI, *Učenik melanholijske: šansone, balade, ronda*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Beograd, Danteon, 2011.

¹⁴ See: ŠARL ORLEANSKI, *Pesme*, prev. Predrag Vertovšek, in: *Koraci: časopis za književnost, umetnost i kulturu*, 34, 7/8, Kragujevac, Nova svetlost, 2004, p. 73-74.

d'Aquitaine, Peire Rogier, Jaufré Rudel, Raimbaut d'Orange, Arnaut Daniel, Béatrice de Die, Clara d'Anduza, Thibaut de Champagne, Adam de la Halle, Rutebeuf, Chrétien de Troyes, Guillem de Cabestany, Raimon Jordan and others.¹⁵

In addition, in 1974, three poems written by Eustache Deschamps and translated by Radmila Šalabalić were published: *Rondeau* [Poulz, puces, puour et pourceaulx], *Ballade* [En Haynaut et en Brabant], *Ballade* [Quant j'ay la terre et mer avironnée].¹⁶ One year later, another Deschamps' poem, *Ballade (Sur la tristesse de sa vie)*, translated by an anonymous translator, was published in the literary magazine *Braničevo*.¹⁷ In the same issue of that magazine, the Serbian translation of the poem by Alain Chartier, *Ballade sur les flatteurs*, was published, also without name of translator.¹⁸ In the Yugoslav linguistic area, in 1977 a narrative poem by Guillaume de Machaut, *Le remède de Fortune*, was published, translated by Luko Paljetak, based on the free translation by V. Ćosić.¹⁹ In 1992, in the magazine *Kulture Istoka*, Jaufré Rudel's poems were published, translated by Kolja Mićević.²⁰ The same translator translated also another narrative poem by Guillaume de Machaut, *Le livre du voir dit*.²¹

Concerning the epic poetry, among numerous French *chansons de geste*, two probably most important works were translated into Serbian by Vlado Drašković: *La Chanson de Roland* (1960, 1981, 1987, 1997) and *Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople* (1965, 1973).²² Some of those editions are bilingual.

The translation activity is more prolific when it comes to chivalric romances and short stories. The most translated works are included in the Matter of Britain: Kolja Mićević translated several works by Chrétien de Troyes (*Philomela*; *Perceval ou le conte du Graal*; *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la charrette*)²³. The same translator translated *La Châtelaine de Vergi* by an anonymous author²⁴, short stories in verse by Marie de France, *Chèvrefeuille*²⁵, as well as the story of Tristan and Iseult²⁶. Besides Kolja Mićević, there are three more translators who translated the story of Tristan and Iseult into Serbian (Serbo-Croatian): Milenko Stojanović (1954, 1958),

¹⁵ See: MIĆEVIĆ, Kolja (ed), *Antologija trubadurske poezije*, Beograd, BIGZ, 1973; MIĆEVIĆ, Kolja (ed), *Antologija francuske poezije: od 1400 do 1800*, Beograd, Prosveta, 1975; MIĆEVIĆ, Kolja (ed), *Antologija francuske šansone i balade*, Sarajevo, "Veselin Masleša", 1987; MIĆEVIĆ, Kolja (ed), *Četiri godišnja doba francuske poezije. Proleće. Trubaduri, truveri, srednji vek*, Banja Luka, Novi Glas, 1991; MIĆEVIĆ, Kolja (ed), *Živa antologija francuske poezije: od XI do XX veka*, knj. 1, Beograd, Treći trg, 2013.

¹⁶ See: DEŠAN, Estaš, *Rondo [Vaške, buve, smrad i svinje]*, *Balada [U Enou, u Brabantu]*, *Balada [Kad obidoh ja sve zemlje i sva mora]*, in: Letopis Matice srpske, 413, 3 (mart 1974), Novi Sad, 1974, p. 273-276.

¹⁷ See: DEŠAN, Estaš, *Balada o bolnom životu*, in: Braničevo: časopis za kulturu, umetnost i društvena pitanja, god. 21, 1 (januar/februar 1975), Požarevac, Kulturno prosvetna zajednica opštine Požarevac, 1975, p. 51.

¹⁸ See: ŠARTIJE, Alen, *Balada o laskavcu*, in: Braničevo: časopis za kulturu, umetnost i društvena pitanja, god. 21, 1 (januar/februar 1975), Požarevac, Kulturno prosvetna zajednica opštine Požarevac, 1975, p. 52.

¹⁹ See: MAŠO, Gijom de, *Fortunin lijek*, prev. Luko Paljetak, prema slobodnom prijevodu V. Ćosića, Zadar, Muzičke večeri u Donatu, 1977.

²⁰ See: RIDEL, Žofre, *Pesme trubadura: žudnja za dragom iz daljine*, prev. Kolja Mićević, in: Kulture Istoka: časopis za filozofiju, književnost i umetnost Istoka, 9, 31 (1992), Gornji Milanovac, Dečje novine, 1992, p. 31-33.

²¹ See: MAŠO, Gijom de, *Venerin oblak: epistolarni ljubavni roman*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Banja Luka, Art Print, 2005.

²² See: *Pesma o Rolandu*, prev. Vlado Drašković, Beograd, Nolit, 1960; *Pesma o Rolandu*, prev. Vlado Drašković, Beograd, Narodna knjiga, 1981; *Pesma o Rolandu*, prev. Vlado Drašković, Beograd, Naučna knjiga, 1987; *Pesma o Rolandu*, prev. Vlado Drašković, Beograd, Univerzitet, 1997; *Putovanje Karla Velikog u Jerusalim i Carigrad*, prev. Vlado Drašković, Beograd, Naučna knjiga, 1965; *Putovanje Karla Velikog u Jerusalim i Carigrad*, prev. Vlado Drašković, Beograd, Izdavačko-informativni centar studenata, 1973.

²³ See: KRETJEN DE TROA, *Filomela*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Kraljevo, Narodna biblioteka "Stefan Prvovenčani", 2008; KRETJEN DE TROA, *Filomela*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Beograd, Danteon, 2010; KRETJEN DE TROA, *Parsifal ili Legenda o Svetom Gralu*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Beograd, SKZ, 2009; KRETJEN DE TROA, *Lancelot ili Vitez na taljigama*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Beograd, SKZ, 2011.

²⁴ See: *Kaštelanka iz Veržija*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Banja Luka, Littera, 2004.

²⁵ See: MARIJA OD FRANCUSKE, *Orlovi nokti: kratke priče u stihu*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Banja Luka, Littera, 2004. *Lais* written by Marie de France were translated into Croatian by Mate Maras and published in 1999 under the title *Pjesni*.

²⁶ See: *Tristan i Izolda: jedna srednjovekovna "love story"*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Banja Luka, Littera, 2004.

Desanka M. Pavlović (1967) and Valentin Putanec (1986).²⁷ Moreover, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, an anonymous medieval French chantefable, a combination of prose and verse, was translated by Mladen Leskovac and published in 1964 (extract) and in 1965.²⁸ *Le lai de Narcisse*, an anonymous text, probably from the 12th or 13th century, was translated by Kolja Mićević and published in 2014.²⁹ Suzana Pavlov translated Christine de Pizan's allegoric story about the City of Ladies, *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*. The Serbian translation was published in 2003.³⁰

The literary cycle of allegorical fables, *Le Roman de Renart*, was partially translated by the Croat scholar specialised in Romance languages, Vojmir Vinja, and was published in 1961.³¹ Another major work of French medieval literature, *Le Roman de la Rose*, a poem written in form of an allegoric dream vision, was translated by Kolja Mićević (only the first part written by Guillaume de Lorris).³² An extract from *Le Roman de la Rose* was translated by Tatjana Đurin and published in 2009 within the Serbian translation of Jean Starobinski's *Largesse*.³³

Concerning the comic and satiric medieval literature, the most translated texts are fabliaux, short narratives in verse. Olivera Milićević translated two fabliaux, *Les trois aveugles de Compiègne* and *Le vilain mire*, published in 1977.³⁴ Eustache d'Amiens' fabliau, *Le bouchier d'Abeville*, was translated by Vojmir Vinja in 1972, as well as the anonymous late 14th or early 15th century satire in prose, *Les Quinze joies de mariage*, published in Serbo-Croatian in 1954 and in 1972.³⁵

Regarding the historiography, Petar Skok translated three chronicles: *La Conquête de Constantinople* by Geoffroi de Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople* by Robert de Clari and *La Cronique des Veniciens* by Martino Da Canale.³⁶ More recently, in 2011, Dejan Acović retranslated Villehardouin's *La Conquête de Constantinople*.³⁷

Regarding the translation of the French medieval literature into Serbian, relatively small number of translated works, as well as small number of translators, reveals the major problems in translating these old texts. The translator must be specialised, not only in language of these texts, (in this case the Old French and the Old Occitan), but in their numerous dialects and literary traditions as well. Moreover, since the French medieval literature was written mainly in verse, the translator must be naturally disposed toward the poetic expression. Therefore probably, the most productive Serbian translator of the French medieval literature is a poet – Kolja Mićević

4. Serbian medieval literature translated into French

In order to investigate what segment of the Serbian medieval literature has been translated into French, we used catalogues of the National Library of France (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

²⁷ See: BEDIJE, Žozef, *Tristan i Izolda*, prev. Milenko Stojanović, Beograd, Znanje, 1954; BEDIJE, Žozef, *Tristan i Izolda*, prev. Milenko Stojanović, Beograd, Nolit, 1958; BEDIJE, Žozef, *Roman o Tristanu i Izoldi*, prev. Desanka M. Pavlović, Beograd, Nolit, 1967; BEDIJE, Žozef, *Tristan i Izolda*, prev. Valentin Putanec, Zagreb, Naprijed, 1986.

²⁸ See: *Povest o Okasenu i Nikoleti*, prev. Mladen Leskovac, in: *Letopis Matice srpske*, 394, 4 (oktobar 1964), Novi Sad, 1964, p. 286-317; *Povest o Okasenu i Nikoleti*, prev. Mladen Leskovac, Novi Sad, Matica srpska, 1965.

²⁹ See: *Legenda o Narcisu*, prev. Kolja Mićević, in: *Trag: časopis za književnost, umetnost i kulturu*, 9, 40 (decembar 2014), Vrbas, Narodna biblioteka "Danilo Kiš", 2014, p. 138-149.

³⁰ See: PIZAN, Kristina de, *Grad žena*, Beograd, Feministička 94, 2003.

³¹ See: *Roman o Renardu*, prev. Vojmir Vinja, Zagreb, Zora, 1961.

³² See: LORIS, Gijom de, *Roman o Ruži*, prev. Kolja Mićević, Banja Luka, Littera, 2004.

³³ See: STAROBINSKI, Žan, *Darežljivost*, prev. Mira Vuković, Sremski Karlovci, Novi Sad, Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, 2009, p. 222-225.

³⁴ See: *Tri slepca iz Kompjenja; Seljak vidar*, prev. Olivera Milićević, in: *Letopis Matice srpske*, 420, 1-2 (jul-avgust 1977), Novi Sad, 1977, p. 178-194.

³⁵ See: *Petnaest bračnih radosti*, prev. Vojmir Vinja, Zagreb, Zora, 1954; *Petnaest bračnih radosti i Eustache d'Amiens, Mesar iz Abevillea*, prev. Vojmir Vinja, Zagreb, Zora, 1972.

³⁶ See: *Tri starofrancuske hronike o Zadru: u godini 1202*, prev. Petar Skok, Zagreb, JAZU, 1951.

³⁷ See: VILARDUEN, Žofroa, *Hronika četvrtog krstaškog rata i osvajanje Konstantinopolja*, prev. Dejan Acović, Loznica, Karpos, 2011.

as referent repository of all that is published in France, especially its digital library for online use named Gallica, as well as catalogues of The Matica Srpska Library.³⁸

One of the oldest Serbian documents in the monastery Hilandar, the liturgical book written by Saint Sava (Rastko Nemanjić) in 1199, the *Karyes Typicon*, was translated into French by Viktorija Stegić and published in Belgrade in 1985.³⁹

Concerning hagiographies, old Serbian biographies of Saints or ecclesiastical leaders called *žitija*, very few of them were translated into French, in the middle of the 19th century, such as Domentijan's work *Les Némania: vie de St Syméon et de St Sabba*. The translation was made by Slavist Aleksander Borejko Chodźko in 1858.⁴⁰ It is about two most important figures of the Serbian history: Stefan Nemanja, called Grand Prince, founder of the Nemanjić dynasty, canonised by the Serbian Orthodox Church under the name of Saint Symeon Myrrh-streaming who abdicated in favour of his son Stefan Nemanjić, the future King of Serbia, and went to Mount Athos; Rastko Nemanjić, Stefan Nemanja's youngest son, later known as Saint Sava, who was the archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Church and the founder of the Serbian law. Thus, in historical and in clerical sens, both biographies have great significance for the nation. A monk Domentijan the Hilandarian, a major figure in the Serbian medieval literature, was a contemporary of Saint Sava. He wrote biography of Saint Sava in 1253 which was in fact an apotheosis of a monasticism and Christianity, and ten years later he wrote biography of Saint Symeon (1263/1264).

Another important text, connected to the constitution of the legal system of the Serbian Empire in the 14th century, *Dušanov zakonik* (1349), was translated by Biljana Janevska (*Code de Dušan*) and was published as bilingual edition in 2008.⁴¹

More recently, in 2013, an anthology of the Serbian medieval poetry was published in the digital literary magazine, *Serbica*, dedicated to the promotion of the Serbian literature in France. It contains the poems from the 12th to 16th century written by Saint Sava, Stefan Prvovenčani, Atanasije, Pandeh, Emperor Stefan Uroš V, Jefimija (secular name Jelena Mrnjavčević), Monk Isaiah, Monk of Rila, Jakov of Serres, Pahomije, Siluan, Rajčin Sudić, Patriarch Jefrem, Despot Stefan Lazarević, Đurađ Zubrović, Dimitrije Kantakuzen, Teodor Ljubavić, Monk of Mount Athos. The poems were translated by Boris Lazić.⁴²

An important part of the translated literature from Serbian language into French is given to the epic poetry⁴³. Some of those anonymous poems belonging to the Cycle of Kosovo (Kosovski ciklus), a sort of chansons de geste, were translated for the first time in the 19th century, in the period of Romanticism which encouraged the development of national languages and folklore. The battle of Kosovo, held on 15th June 1389 between the Serbian troops led by the prince Lazar Hrebeljanović and the army of the Ottoman Empire under the Sultan Murad I, has been considered as the essential event for the Serbian national history, as well as for its spiritual being. Thus the first choice of texts to be translated into French was turned to that direction. Serbian national verses

³⁸ <http://www.bnf.fr>, www.gallica.bnf.fr Electronic catalogues of the Matica Srpska Library are available on <http://www.vbs.rs/scripts/cobiss?command=CONNECT&base=80017&lani=sr&scri=lat>

Among useful bibliographical sources concerning the Serbian literature translated into French see: PAVLOVIĆ, Mihailo and JANJIĆ, Dušan (eds), *Bibliographie française sur la poésie populaire serbe et croate*, Beograd, Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1995; PETROVIĆ, Nikola S., *Prilog francuskoj bibliografiji o Srbima i Hrvatima (1544-1900)*, Beograd, Državna štamparija, 1900; POPOVIĆ, Pavle, *La littérature yougoslave*, Paris, Librairie Félix Alcan, 1931; SREBRO, Milivoj (ed), *Bibliographie de la littérature serbe en France (1945-2004)*, Beograd, Narodna biblioteka Srbije, 2004.

³⁹ See: *Le typikon de Carée de Saint Sava*, réd. par Dimitrije Bogdanović, traduction française Viktorija Stegić, Belgrade, Ed. phototypique, 1985.

⁴⁰ See: *Legendes slaves du Moyen-Age 1169-1237: les Némania, vies de St Symeon et de St Sabba*, traduction du paléoslave en français, avec un texte en regard, par Alexandre Chodźko, Paris, l'auteur, 1858.

⁴¹ See: *Code de Dušan*, [traduit en français par] Biljana Janevska, Valjevo, M&S, 2008.

⁴² See: LAZIĆ, Boris (ed), *Anthologie de la poésie serbe médiévale*, traduction, choix et introduction Boris Lazić, in : *Serbica*, N° 2-3, 2013 (<http://serbica.u-bordeaux3.fr/index.php/a/347-anthologie-de-la-poesie-serbe-medievale>).

⁴³ Although the first collection of the Serbian folk literature was published in the 19th century, the epic poetry was composed between the 14th and 19th century, while the lyric folk poetry probably has pagan origins.

concerning the battle of Kosovo, which have been finally collected by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, were selectively translated and published in France in 1834 under the title *Chants populaires des Serviens*, with announcement that they have been versified by Mme Elise Voïart according to Talvy's translation⁴⁴.

Some books containing national chants unfortunately stay without indication of the publishing year. For instance, we know that C. Courrière translated *La Bataille de Kossovo (l'épopée serbe)* during the the 19th century, but we could not say the exact date⁴⁵. Otherwise *La Bataille de Kossovo, rhapsodie serbe tirée des chants populaires* has been translated in 1868 by another author, Adolphe d'Avril.⁴⁶ Afterwards, a great Slavist, Louis Léger, showed his expertise on the topic and made a considerable number of studies on Slavic civilization, among them *Le Cycle épique de Marko Kralievitch* (1879, 1906).

Auguste Dozon made an amazing effort translating into French his choice of the Balkans national poetry under the title *L'épopée serbe: chants populaires héroïques: Serbie, Bosnie et Hertzégovine, Croatie, Dalmatie, Monténégro* (1888)⁴⁷. In that period, the interest for the Balkans, in general, was raising in France. Therefore, several studies concerning the Slavic mythology, customs, music and other cultural specificities were published, such as Chodźko's works on Slavic world, Léger's studies on Slavic mythology (1897, 1901)⁴⁸ and Divna Veković's *Etnographie européenne, vie et coutumes du peuple serbe* (1929)⁴⁹.

So, at the beginning of the 20th century some parts of the national epic verses were translated. In 1956 three famous epic poems, *La fille de Kossovo (Kosovka devojka)*, *Kraljevitch Marko et la fée (Kraljević Marko i vila)* and *La mort de Kraljevitch Marko (Smrt Kraljevića Marka)*, translated by Christiane Talodoire, were published in literary magazine *Les Quatre dauphins*.⁵⁰ Afterwards, Blaže Koneski published a book on Serbian prince Marko Kraljević with a choice of poems from the epic cycle of Marko, translated by Mira Čepinčić in collaboration with the Belgian critic André Doms (1986)⁵¹. In the 1990s, *Geste du Kossovo* was published in bilingual French-Serbian edition, with a preface written by the Serbian translator Biljana Janevska (1999)⁵². Due to her efforts, *Les poèmes serbes épiques* were published in 2008⁵³. More recently, *Le cycle du Kosovo, la poésie épique serbe* and *Le cycle du prince Marko, la poésie épique serbe*, were also translated by Janevska (2013)⁵⁴, but for the first time in decasyllabic verse, typical of the Serbian epic poetry. This remarkable accomplishment, published as bilingual edition, brings together all

⁴⁴ Talvy's work probably precedes Elise Voïart's translation, but the note remains unclear: *Chants populaires des Serviens*, recueillis par Wuk Stéphanowitsch [Karadžić], et traduits d'après Talvy, par Mme Elise Voïart, Paris, A. Mercklein, 1834.

⁴⁵ See: *La Bataille de Kossovo (l'épopée serbe)*, [traduction de C. Courrière], [s. l.], [s. n.], [s. a.].

⁴⁶ See: *La Bataille de Kossovo, rhapsodie serbe tirée des chants populaires*, [traduit par Adolphe d'Avril], Paris, [s. n.], 1868. The revised, bilingual edition of this book will be published one century later: *La Bataille de Kossovo: chants épiques serbes*, traduit par Adolphe d'Avril, préface de Connène Betchirovitch, édition bilingue, Paris, Un infini cercle bleu, 2006.

⁴⁷ See: *L'épopée serbe: chants populaires héroïques: Serbie, Bosnie et Hertzégovine, Croatie, Dalmatie, Monténégro*, traduits sur les originaux, avec une introduction et des notes, par Auguste Dozon, Paris, E. Leroux, 1888.

⁴⁸ See: LEGER, Louis, *Etudes de mythologie slave*, Paris, Maisonneuve, 1897; LEGER, Louis, *La mythologie slave*, Paris, E. Leroux, 1901.

⁴⁹ See: VEKOVITCH, Divna, *Etnographie européenne, vie et coutumes du peuple serbe*, Alençon, impr. de Laverdure, 1929.

⁵⁰ See: *Chants populaires serbes*, choix, présentation et traduction Christiane Talodoire, in: *Les Quatre dauphins*, N° 3, 1956, p. 14-26.

⁵¹ See: KONESKI, Blaže, *Le roi Marko: [suivi d']un choix de poèmes*, traduits par Mira Cepincic et André Doms, Paris, Ed. Saint-Germain-des-Prés, 1986.

⁵² See: *Geste du Kossovo*, [traduit par] Biljana Janevska, [texte serbe et traduction en regard avec une introduction en français], Beograd, Rivel Ko, 1999.

⁵³ See: *Les poèmes serbes épiques*, traduit et versifié par Biljana Janevska, Valjevo, M&S, 2008.

⁵⁴ See: *Ly cycle du Kossovo: la poésie épique serbe*, traduite par Biljana Janevska, texte français et texte serbe en regard, Valjevo, éd. de l'auteur, 2013; *Le cycle du prince Marko: la poésie épique serbe*, chanté par Biljana Janevska, Valjevo, autorsko izdanje, 2013.

poems of two epic cycles (cycle of Kosovo, and cycle of prince Marko), and in the most representative way offers Serbian medieval epic poems as an entire unit of cultural treasure to the French speaking readership.

The cycle of Serbian folk lyrics, also collected by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, is translated into French as well. *Les chants féminins serbes*⁵⁵ were translated by Philéas Lebesque in 1920, with preface, comments and annotations by Miodrag Ibrovac, a great specialist in Serbian and Greek folk poetry⁵⁶. This edition was enriched by some traditional arias.

Thanks to Vuk Stefanović Karadžić's significant effort, Serbian medieval short stories and fairy tales were also assembled. Some of them are included in the international collection of folklore (*Collection internationale de folklore*) directed by J. de la Pradelle. Among them were Divna Veković's translations made with collaboration of M. Ginier under the title *Contes populaires serbes* (1934)⁵⁷. Furthermore, Ljiljana Huibner-Fuzellier and Raymond Fuzellier (1987, 2014) translated into French a lot of Serbian short stories, among them famous fairy tale *Zlatna jabuka i devet paunica* (*Le pommier d'or et les neuf paonnes*)⁵⁸.

As can be seen from the above, a great part of translated works were connected to the heroic vision of the Serbian nation. Due to the collector, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, whose aim was to preserve all national oral tradition from abandon, these works gained their final form which made them suitable for translation into European languages, among them French.

5. Conclusions

Concerning the French medieval literature, the translation activity in Serbia is only partially conform to the postulates of the Polysystem theory. Most of the translated works were published in the 20th and 21st century, when the Serbian literature wasn't young any more, nor weak, nor in crisis, but, on the contrary, well developed and flourishing. Nevertheless, it has always been peripheral in the context of the World literature, due to historical circumstances and linguistic limitations.

Moreover, the choice of the texts to be translated seems to defy the Polysystem theory in some segments. There are no many translations of chansons de geste, because this literary genre is well developed in the Serbian literature; therefore, there is no need to „import” it. Neither the clerical literature is represented in the Serbian translations. That lack of interest could probably be explained by the reign of the communist regime in the second half of the 20th century, as well as by the differences in the religious tradition.

According to the Polysystem theory, texts to be translated are chosen by the receiving culture where those types of texts do not exist. In case of the Serbian culture it is true, because most of the translated works are the troubadour poetry and the chivalric romance, literary genres that are not native to the Serbian culture. However, both the troubadour poetry and the chivalric romance represent only a segment of the French literature translated into Serbian. Moreover, those works are translated too late to make any significant impact on the Serbian literature.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, translating the French medieval literature in the 20th and 21st-century Serbia is not an anachronism.

⁵⁵ See: LEBESQUE, Philéas, *Les chants féminins serbes, poèmes populaires traduits en français pour la première fois avec un commentaire comparatif, des airs traditionnels et diverses études critiques*, préface de Miodrag Ibrovac, Paris, E. Sansot, 1920.

⁵⁶ See: IBROVAC, Miodrag, *Claude Fauriel et la fortune européenne des poésies populaires grecque et serbe: étude d'histoire romantique*; suivie du Cours de Fauriel, professé en Sorbonne, 1831-32, Paris, M. Didier, 1966.

⁵⁷ See: *Contes populaires serbes*, recueillis d'après Vouk Karadjitch, [traduit] par Divna Vékovitch avec la collaboration de M. Ginier, préface de Son Exc. M. M[iroslav] Spalíkovitch, Paris, [s. n.], 1934.

⁵⁸ See: *Contes populaires serbes*, [recueillies par] Vouk Karadjitch, traduction et notes de Ljiljana Huibner-Fuzellier et Raymond Fuzellier, Lausanne – Paris, L'Age d'homme, 1987; *Le pommier d'or et les neuf paonnes et autres contes*, [recueillies par Vouk Karadjitch], imaginé et conçu par Natacha Pejín, illustrations par Mila Gajín, traduit du serbe par Ljiljana Huibner-Fuzellier et Raymond Fuzellier, Paris, Un infini cercle bleu, 2014.

⁵⁹ In the Middle Ages, the translation activity in Serbia was focused on other types of texts. About the translation activity in Medieval Serbia see: ĐURIN, Tatjana, “Three Monks and a Philosopher”, in: FEDERICI, Federico, TESSICINI, Dario (eds), *Translators, Interpreters and Cultural Negotiators*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

It rather expresses the need of the target (peripheral) literature to fill the gaps in the translation of the literary tradition which has always maintained a central position in that target literature. Major works of the French medieval literature are translated and almost all medieval literary genres are included: chansons de geste, troubadour poetry, chivalric romance, allegorical literature, comic and satirical literature, historiography. The major authors of the French medieval literature, such as Villon, Charles d'Orléans, Guillaume de Machaut, Eustache Deschamps, Christine de Pizan, Chrétien de Troyes and others, became available to the Serbian readership and entered the Serbian culture, thanks to few people, translators, who were able, using their knowledge and poetic skills, to fill the temporal and linguistic gap that separates us from the medieval times.

On the other hand, only a few significant clerical texts written in old Serbian, as well as the most important legal medieval text, entered the French literary system. Nonetheless, a considerably greater part of Serbian folk literature was translated into French and was researched by a number of specialists.

Finally, it is clear that, concerning the medieval literature, the French tradition maintains the central position within the Serbian literary system, while the Serbian medieval literature maintains the peripheral position within the French literary system.

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