

# **H.C. Andersen and Bulgaria: the apolitical writer and traveller meeting communities at a Bazaar**

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## **Abstract**

The universal humanistic values in H.C. Andersen's works have made an impact on Bulgarian culture. The paper outlines the two-way intercultural relationship of H.C. Andersen's works and Bulgaria – the first part focuses on his description of this country in *A Poet's Bazaar* (1846) and the second on the reception of his works in Bulgarian culture. In his travelogue Andersen shared his impressions of Bulgaria and showed compassion to its people, proving to be a real cosmopolitan and taking a non-political but humanistic attitude to the rebellious events on the Balkans in 1841, influencing the way his Danish and European readers look upon this part of the world. The other aspect of the intercultural relationship focuses on the reception of H.C. Andersen's works in Bulgaria. It outlines the three main phases in this process, discussing the translations made from different languages and their editions. These publications have an impact on the Bulgarian language, the formation of expressions and set phrases. They prove to be another means of inter-cultural exchange, overcoming the limitations of regional belonging and national identity, while transferring universal values. H.C. Andersen's ideas of cosmopolitanism and universalism help us adapt ourselves to the constantly changing communities we live in.

## **Introduction**

No other Dane has made a greater impact on Bulgarian culture than Hans Christian Andersen. The paper outlines the two-way intercultural relationship between H.C. Andersen's works and Bulgaria. The first part focuses on Hans Christian Andersen's own impressions of Bulgaria, which he included in his travelogue *A Poet's Bazaar (En Digters Bazar)* from 1846, in the part, entitled *The Passage of the Danube (Donau-Fart)*, which describes his attitude to this country and the current events at the time of his journey across the Balkans. Andersen's travelogue demonstrates his interest in and striving to really understand this part of the world. His cosmopolitan and humanistic views can be found in the descriptions and comments he makes

on the events and conditions of life in Bulgaria. H.C. Andersen was fascinated by the mix of cultures and the variety of ways of life. He depicted the minarets of the mosques that rose along with the ruins of ancient Bulgarian towns and fortresses. He was fascinated how ordinary Muslim and Christian people cohabited peacefully and at the same time sensed the tension of the ongoing uprisings. At that time the Bulgarians were under the oppression of the Ottoman Empire and were striving to preserve their identity and the unity of their community. These efforts escalated in uprisings, which were not well organized and led to massacres of civilians by the ruling Turks. Although Andersen remained apolitical he could not stay indifferent to the situation of the Bulgarian people. Europe learned about these events on the Balkans through the reports and travelogues of foreign journalists and writers, brave enough to undertake the risky journey in this area. Actually this information raised the attention of the general public in Europe to the atrocities on the Balkans. Andersen made his humble contribution in this respect. Through his travelogue he became a mediator of cultures and made his Danish and European readers meet Bulgaria: a country completely unfamiliar and peripheral to the civilized world.

Another means of trans-cultural communication are the translations of Andersen's works, which became very popular in Bulgaria because of their universal messages. The second part of the paper provides a review of how Andersen's works were received in Bulgaria from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the present day, outlining the main tendencies during three periods of reception. These perspectives of the two-way intercultural relationship between Andersen's works and Bulgarian culture are interacting as they both influence the development of Bulgaria during and after its liberation in 1878, its opening to Europe's achievements and the formation of a new community of people with a modern and progressive way of thinking, which is of crucial importance for its preservation in the future and its determination as part of Europe and not of the Orient.

The messages of tolerance and humanity are dominant in H.C. Andersen's works (de Mylius, 2006). Andersen proves to be a mediator of cultures and a messenger of values between communities, namely that of Denmark and Bulgaria and in wider scope of the European community and the Balkan one (Kofoed, 1996).

### **H.C. Andersen's Bulgaria**

Hans Christian Andersen undertook many journeys across Europe but one of the most exciting ones was to the Orient. He regards and presents himself as a European cosmopolitan, recounting his journey to his home audience (Oxfeldt, 2010). The author's descriptions deliver information

about the foreign cultures and are a demonstration of the author's ability to experience emotionally the unfamiliar places, communities and cultures (Oxfeldt, 2010, pp. 4-6).

He travelled in order to tell his stories about the places he visited and the people he met, to his Danish readers. This was not just an adventurous experience for him, but a huge literary project (de Mylius, 2016, pp. 424-425). Andersen's descriptions of the Orient are based on realistic views and actual events but are poetical in the way he experiences and depicts them for his readers (Brandes, 1964, p. 225). Andersen enters upon this journey to the Orient with an open mind, freeing himself from the prejudices of the civilized world (Oxfeldt, 2010, p. 26).

This trip turns to be a hazard to him. It is practically a risk for his life and a risk for breaking the stereotypes of a Dane, who finds himself in a completely unfamiliar community, where the conditions of life, the religious and moral values are intriguing and quite different from the European (de Mylius, 2016, p. 430). On his way back from his journey to Greece and Turkey in 1841 Andersen was faced with the choice to start the safe trip back home across Greece and Italy, or to travel by ship across the Black Sea, and then take a steam-boat up the Danube to the heart of Europe. At the time, the Balkans was a stage of uproar and battles. Andersen had heard about the suppressed uprising of the Christian Bulgarians, but nonetheless decided to take the risk. In a letter to Ludwig Ross from April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1841 he shared his fears:

Det var mit Ønske at gaae Donauveien hjem, men De veed vel at hele Bulgariet er under Oprør; jeg har været i stor Strid med mig selv om jeg aligevel skulde vove denne Reise, eller tage hjem over Syra og Triest. Den østeriske Menister mener at jeg vel tør vove Donaufarten da jeg kommer i Selskab med en østerisk Coureer der faaer Depescher, jeg har da besluttet at vove det, skjøndt jeg er virkelig bange. Den 5 mai, Napoleons Dødsdag, seile vi afsted over det sorte Hav til Kystenje, hvor vi til Lands gaae til Silistria og der indskibes; (The Hans Christian Andersen Center, n.d.).

So, on May 5<sup>th</sup> he departed from Constantinople on board the ship Ferdinand I, which sailed through the Bosphorus to the Black Sea and headed to Constanta (Kustendje). Two days later, on May 7<sup>th</sup>, he boarded a steamship, called Argo, and continued up the Danube along the Bulgarian and Romanian coast. The first Bulgarian fortress he mentioned was Silistria, (nowadays Silistra), which he actually could not see, since the ship passed by it at midnight. Here are his first contemplations:

The coast of Bulgaria, on the contrary, rose with its underwood and bushes. The fat soil appeared particularly well suited for agriculture. Long districts lay completely waste. Thousands emigrate from Europe to America; how much better a home could they not find

here? Here is fertile arable land close by Europe's largest river – the highway to the East (Andersen, 1846, p. 122).

Andersen's admiration of the nature is transformed into an unexpected comment about the flow of emigrants from Europe to the New World, which offered opportunities for prosperity. At a time of brain drain in present Bulgaria his words sound like a prophetic warning for future generations. The next town he passed was Tutrakan, which he called Tutturcan:

It was Tutturcan; the little garden was planted before every house. Half-naked boys ran along the shore, and shouted 'Urolah.' Here everything announced peace and safety; the disturbances in the country had not yet reached these shores. However, we learned from the Turks, whom we had taken on board the previous night at Silistria, that several refugees had crossed the Danube, to seek refuge in Bucharest. On the other side of the mountains revolt and death were raging. (Andersen, 1846, p. 123).

We find similar comments in H.C. Andersen's diaries in his notes dated May 8<sup>th</sup>:

Bulgarien synes kun lidt beboet, her vilde være et Land for de mange der nu ellers gaae til America, hvilken Handel kunde de ei have ved den store Donau. Qvarantine Huus ovre i Walachiet. I Toutokan, en Landsby, jublende Drengene raabte saa de vare hæse paa tyrkisk bulgarisk urolah ☺: lykkelig Reise; (Andersen, 1995, p. 213).

H.C. Andersen heard the boys shout 'Urolah!', which most probably was 'Ura!' in Bulgarian or 'Hurray!'. This is usually a cry of joy or of military troops going into battle. Obviously, the travellers on board the ship were conscious of the turbulent events in Bulgaria and this was only a reminder of the dangerous area they passed by. Andersen also knew of the uprisings on the Balkans, but in spite of the danger he intentionally entered in the heart of them. This shows exceptional determination in a man, who suffered many different phobias, such as losing his passport, being hurt in fire or buried alive. The adventurous spirit and inner curiosity had overcome these fears. Nevertheless, he probably had not realized the real scope of the danger he had got himself into.

The so-called Nish uproar took place from April until June 1841. It was the first large-scale rebellion of the Bulgarians in the north-western part of the country. According to the History of Bulgaria (Todorov, 1985), it broke out as a response to the unprecedented massacre of Bulgarians on April 6<sup>th</sup> 1841, exactly on Easter day, in the village of Kamenitsa, where the local Ottoman ruler Mustafa Sabri Pasha initiated a massive killing in the village church. Many Bulgarian women were raped and then slaughtered in front of their families, who were unable to protect them. The news of the shocking cruelty spread quickly, and consequently the uproar

gradually spread in the regions of Nish, Pirot and Leskovats. It was not well-organized, if at all. The people, who spontaneously opposed their oppressors, were armed with their agricultural tools such as axes and pitchforks. Very few of them had their own guns. As expected, the revolt was suppressed. 225 villages, the churches and monasteries in the area were plundered and burned down by the Ottoman soldiers. Thousands of people fled into Serbia (Todorov, 1985, pp. 331-350).

At the time of these events the preparation for the Three Braila Uprisings, which started a few months later on July 13 1841 was at its peak. Bulgarian merchants and craftsmen gathered money to arm a small legion of volunteers. According to the plan, the revolutionaries gathered in Braila, Romania, so most of them had secretly crossed the river Danube. From there they would be transported back to Bulgaria to fight for its freedom. However, the conspiracy was revealed by the Ottoman services and many of the revolutionaries were pursued and eventually captured (Todorov, 1985, pp. 350-370).

Andersen was well aware of the events on the Balkans at the time of his travel. He read about them in the press and was concerned about the fate of the people who lived there. Nevertheless, he believed his mission was not the one of a fighter for freedom and defender of political positions. One of the reviews of *A Poet's Bazaar* was published in the satirical weekly *Corsaren*. The author was Meir Goldschmidt who praised Andersen's talent to describe landscapes but commented that he neglected the poverty and suppressed position of the people he met during his travels.

To this Andersen barely responded at all. He answered Goldschmidt in a paragraph in his autobiography: 'I felt no necessity to mix myself up in such matters ... Politics are no affair of mine. God has impaired me another mission. (...) In his fiction, he rebelled, depicting the triumph of the poor and obscure over the conventional establishment. In life, his instincts were at one apolitical and anti-democratic, while by temperament he was a diplomat, anxious not to pick a fight, always keen for reconciliation, solicitous of treating people of all classes with courtesy and respect (Wullschlager, 2001, p. 203).

Wishing to remain apolitical. Andersen did not take sides in these events, but sensed the tense atmosphere in the region and showed sympathy for its people. He did not want to be involved in the ongoing public debate in most European countries on the fate of the Balkans. Nevertheless, being a humanist, he took the most natural side of the suffering people in these distant lands. His position is not expressively manifested but is perfectly clear.

Andersen was fascinated by the city of Rustchuck (nowadays Ruse) on the other bank of the river on May 8<sup>th</sup> 1841.

Yellow cliffs arose on the Bulgarian side; we steered in under them; and, whilst we still beheld the shining tower of Giurgevo, we were under the houses and gardens, which form the suburbs to a considerable Bulgarian city, Rustzuk; a number of minarets, the one close to the other, announced that it must be a real city of believers. (Andersen, 1846, pp. 127–128).

Then follows an episode of two men from Andersen's steamship, who try to reach land by swimming. One of them managed to do so, while the other was forced back on board the ship. Wondering what was going on, Andersen exclaimed: "Perhaps the troubles of travel were now to begin in a revolted land! How stood matters in Rustzuk?" (Andersen, 1846, p. 128). Andersen's exclamation creates suspense and provokes the reader to wonder whether their guide in the Orient is in trouble or not. Exclamations and questions shorten the distance between the reader and the author by provoking emotional response and directly involving the reader into the narrative. This story-telling technique is also basic for H.C. Andersen's fairy tales (Brandes, 1964, p. 202). Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether Andersen intentionally used this technique as his doubts and fears of what lies ahead were not groundless. Identical are his contemplations in his matter-of-fact diary, dated May 8<sup>th</sup>:

Paa tyrkisk Side gule Klinte Huse og Haver, Routschuk, med mange hvide Minareter. Børn og Voxne et tyrkisk Bad ud i Donau, men i Ruin, et Fort. Vi laae ved Land; Broen var fyldt med Mennesker, paa hver Side styrtet en ud som søgte mod Land, en anden mod vort Skib, Tyrkerne kastede Stene efter ham, hiin var Qvarantaine Directeuren, en Tyrk, denne Lægen, en Franker, begge med Fessi, hiin havde holdt denne i Halsen at han ei maatte tale til Skibet, denne stødte ham bort og de faldt begge i Vandet. Vi vidste ikke strax hvad det var og da Landet her er i Oprør blev flere ængstelige. (Andersen, 1995, p. 214).

It turned out to be a trivial private affair, namely a fight between the director of quarantine, a Turk, and a doctor, a Frenchman. All the passengers were on the alert and H.C. Andersen was also troubled by the event and was soon relieved of the tension after the problem was solved. The Danish traveller interpreted the same episode in a very similar way in a letter to Jonas Collin, dated May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1841:

En Aften havde vi dog en Scene, der satte os Alle paa Skibet i Opmærksomhed. Vi kastede Anker ved den tyrkisk-bulgariske By Rustschuk. Skibsbroen var opfyldt med Tyrker; pludselig styrtede to Mennesker fra Broen ud i Vandet. En søgte Land, det var en Tyrk, den Anden, en Franke, svømmede ud til os, idet Tyrkerne kastede Stene ud efter ham. Denne var Karantænedoktoren, Tyrken derimod Karantæneinspektør. De vare ej godt stemte mod hinanden, Inspektøren vilde ej tillade Doktoren at tiltale os, der kom fra et forpestet Sted, som han sagde; de stødte til hinanden, og saa gik de til Vands. Imidlertid kom Soldater og Paschaen selv; han steg ombord, og det Hele endte godt. Om Natten blev vi raabt an. Den tyrkiske Brevpost, Hasan, en Tartar, turde ej reise gennem Landet og kom ombord. Oprøret var ti Mile fra os; flere Hundrede vare dræbte, endel Flækker tændte i Brand og Postens Eskorte skudt ned (The Hans Christian Andersen Center, n.d.).

It is striking how the somewhat fragmentary notes in Andersen's diary are transformed into a more picturesque depiction in his travelogue. The actual events are intentionally dramatized to create suspense for the readers, who are likewise involved into the events of the Balkans. The next chapter, entitled 'We sail!' starts with an ecstatic description of Bulgarian nature:

The morning is so beautiful! What an expanse of green plain! what a sweet scent of hay! Are we in Denmark? See what a swarm of flowers! See, grass-grown hills, and barrows as in Zealand; the hand of man has formed them! Everything is so pastoral, so Danish, and yet we are not in Denmark! that green plain where the hay sheds its perfume is Wallachian; the barrows and mounds to the right are in Bulgaria! (Andersen, 1846, p. 131).

H.C. Andersen compares the Bulgarian landscape to his homeland, but the multi-cultural variety onboard among the passengers surprises and attracts the Danish author even more.

Here are fresh faces on board; Rustzuk has sent us many guests during the night. What a mixed tribe! The Turk kneels, and says his morning prayer; his brow touches the ship's deck; close by him sits a Jew in coat of silver tissue, a purple-coloured turban; his yellow slippers stand before him; he holds a parasol over his head though the sun does not shine on him; he takes a little pocket mirror out, looks himself in it, smiles, and now and then plucks the gray hairs out of his beard with a pair of tweezers. We speed past Bulgarian towns! (Andersen, 1846, p. 131).

Andersen is fascinated by the symbiosis of different religions and cultures. The Balkans are a kind of a melting pot, where all the people, no matter what their origins and beliefs are, can live peacefully together, if they are not forced to follow the orders of their rulers and the interests

of the dominating culture. This message is a problem of the present day, too, though now it does not refer only to the Balkans, but to the whole European community.

Once again Andersen finds resemblance to his fatherland, obviously or seemingly already feeling nostalgic for Denmark after travelling abroad for months. Undoubtedly Andersen belongs to the Danish culture and community, but here he demonstrates his ability to feel at home in different places around the world. (Oxfeldt, 2010, p. 16) The resemblance is also a way to shorten the distance between Denmark and Bulgaria as well as between his story and his reader (Rubow, 1943, p. 174).

What is that shining before us! – what white slopes are they on the Bulgarian side? They stand out more and more; it is Danish! They are the chalk cliffs of Moen and have come to meet me! I know all their forms, I know that summer-green high up on the white slopes! Yet they are only bushes. I see now; Moen has woods; Moen has the clear, the blue-green sea under it, and not these brown-yellow waves of the Danube. There lies a city up there, it is Nicopoli, Trajan's city, Bajazet's trophy (Andersen, 1846, p. 133).

Andersen's notes in his diary from May 9<sup>th</sup> give a more detailed explanation of the origin and scenery of Nikopoli:

Nikopoli (bulgarisk) grundet af Trajan efter Seiren over Decebalus; 1200 Aar senere var her Bajazets Seier og Blodbad. Ligger mellem Kridtbjerge, dels paa Klippen, dels i en Kløft, samt ud i Vandet, som var det en Flod af Huse, der udgjød sig her, øverst er Fortificationer af Jord med Riisflætninger. Kridtbjergene ligne ganske Møens Klint (Andersen, 1995, p. 215).

After passing by Nikolpol a well-armed Tartar, who had the task of carrying official letters from Vidin to Constantinople unexpectedly got on board the ship. His presence brought a feeling of anxiety and direct threat of the rebellion, which had forced him to find a roundabout route to his destination. After this episode Andersen's ship passed by Zibru, today divided into two villages Gorni and Dolni Tzibur, Lom – Palanka and reached Vidin. This is the only place where Andersen stepped on Bulgarian ground. According to the procedure, all the passengers were smoked as a precaution against diseases. Andersen explained the strange procedure for disinfection in his letter to Jonas Collin from May 13<sup>th</sup> 1841:

I Widdin havde vi en komisk Karantænescene. Alle, som vilde i Land, maatte først ind i et Slags Skilderhus og ryges, men da Brædtet fra Skibet laa meget skraat, holdt Tyrkerne os smukt i Haanden til vi kom ned, og saa blev vi røget. Philopowitz, der hos Paschaen skulde

forlange de i Nisch standsede Poster udleverede, red uden at blive røget til Paschaen og sad hos ham. (The Hans Christian Andersen Center, n.d.)

They took a short walk around the town, which was extremely muddy after the rain. Andersen was definitely not impressed, but enjoyed having a shave in one of the barber's shops in the town. In the evening the passengers received a gift from the vizier of Vidin at that time Hussein Pasha – a bundle of the newspaper *Allgemeine Zeitung*, where they found more information about the uprising in the region. "... we began to know how matters stood in the country we had passed through. A certain Mladen, and an ecclesiastic named Lefzkoweza, were at the head of these movements. It was a real spiritual feast to get these journals the very best dish that Hussein could send us." (Andersen, 1846, p. 145)

Once again the Danish writer discussed the events in the region of Vidin. It is not certain who these revolt leaders were. It is quite possible that the man mentioned by the name of Mladen was actually Miluten Stoevich, at the time the priest in Leskovats, while the so-called Lefzkoweza was Kotse Mumdzijata, also a local, who was one of the leaders of the Nish uprising (Todorov, 1985). According to the Bulgarian historian Martin Chorbadziski he was also known under the nick-name 'the Candle-maker', where the presumption about his ecclesiastic background most probably originated (Chorbadziski, 2017).

After a stormy night the trip continued towards Serbia where H.C. Andersen bid farewell to Bulgaria, leaving behind the tremor of the dangers, but keeping the memories of its fascinating nature, pointing out a great resemblance to his homeland. He is objective and realistic in his travelogue (de Mylius, 2005, p. 210). As a humanist he showed compassion for the fate of its people, who were still under Turkish rule. The Balkans, where he dared to travel, was a scene of frequent bloodshed, although the areas along the banks of the Danube were obviously spared the brutality at that point. Andersen entered upon the final phase of his return journey, thus crossing the doorstep of Europe. As a real cosmopolitan, he had opened his senses to the picturesque and culturally diverse East. As a good story-teller he managed to involve his readers in the destiny of the revolting peoples, far-off in the periphery of civilized Europe. Actually, it was also due to the reports of such travellers that Europe learned about the unimaginable brutality of the Ottoman soldiers vis-à-vis the Bulgarians. There are other foreign missionaries and journalists who sent their reports on the events in Bulgaria to different European countries, thus influencing the attitude towards the Bulgarians as a community and the direction of development of the historical events in the area. For instance, the French missionary and economist Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui, who was sent to Bulgaria to estimate the scope of the casualties after the Nish uprisings, wrote the travelogue *Travels in Bulgaria* from

1841. (Blanqui, 2005). Later the American journalist and war correspondent Januarius MacGahan described the massacres in Batak in 1876 in an article, entitled *The Turkish Atrocities in Bulgaria* from August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1876 in the Daily News (MacGahan, 2017). It created a public response in Europe and was an important factor in preventing Britain from supporting Turkey in the following Russian-Turkish war in 1877-78, which eventually resulted in liberating Bulgaria from the domination of the Ottoman Empire. H.C. Andersen made his contribution in this respect. His main goal was to be a mediator of cultures, people and their communities or to make the Danes and Europeans meet with the Balkans and the Orient. With the eye of an artist he was precise in means of detail and managed to touch his readers emotionally (Oxfeldt, 2010, p. 11). Andersen probably never thought that he would make a great impact on Bulgarian culture, but he did over time mostly through his fairy tales, which influenced both Bulgarian language and literature.

### **Hans Christian Andersen's reception in Bulgaria**

Danish literature takes up a substantial part in the Bulgarians' notion of the overall Scandinavian way of thinking, world-view and culture. Both Danish and Bulgarian literatures represent two of the so called 'small' cultures and naturally bear the specific features of the national identity of the respective region. However, to a great extent they both demonstrate openness to and interest in the 'other' unfamiliar cultures.

Danish literature became generally known by the Bulgarian public at end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when we can distinguish a process of opening of Bulgarian intellectuals to European achievements in general and to Denmark in particular. Many translations of fiction are made and published, which is a proof of knowledge, understanding and awareness of the literary trends in Europe at the time. These translations are a means of opening of the Bulgarian intellectuals and the general public to European literature. They contribute to the incorporation of the Bulgarian culture to the European and distancing it from the Oriental one. Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) and Georg Brandes (1842-1927) are quickly recognized as two of the most outstanding representatives of Danish literature. Other Danish writers, translated into Bulgarian at that period are Jens Peter Jacobsen (1847-1885), Herman Bang (1857-1912) and Johannes V. Jensen (1873-1950). The choice of these authors is due to their recognition in European literature.

Naturally, H.C. Andersen is the most published Danish writer in Bulgaria – the official bibliography of the books by Danish authors, made by the National Library in Bulgaria, shows that approximately half of all the titles included in it are H.C. Andersen's works. The list covers

first and foremost his original titles, although there are numerous adaptations, which are also a very popular read nowadays. He is best known as a writer of fairy tales, collected in over 45 volumes, dedicated only to his works. There is also a great number of collections which include various authors' works, or are just interpretations of the original stories. These editions are not a matter of discussion in the present paper, since the focus is on the translations and publications of original works by H.C. Andersen.

On the whole, there are three main phases in the reception of H.C. Andersen in Bulgaria. The first one dates back from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1930s, with translations mostly from Russian and German, partly from French and English. This practice was preserved in Bulgaria until the 1950s and was due to a lack of specialists in the so called 'rare' languages, such as Danish. In some cases, the translation is said to be from the original, but it is very doubtful and most often impossible to prove. These translations were often compared with others in several different languages, a fact which shows a striving for accuracy. This practice naturally led to huge discrepancies from the original style and means of expression, but it offered a variety of genres, themes and ideas, which filled in gaps in Bulgarian culture at that time. Especially popular were the scientific and literary magazine 'Nauka' ('Science') and the periodical 'Maritsa'.

These were the first efforts to introduce European literature in Bulgaria in 1878. There was a specific tendency to represent unfamiliar authors to Bulgarian readers in periodicals, which were more accessible and popular than books. The main goal was to educate and introduce the audience to a more versatile literature, to overcome cultural barriers and the vacuum from the time of the Ottoman rule, thus catching up with the rest of Europe. These periodicals were a medium of knowledge from the western world. The decades after 1878 were important for Bulgaria's economic and intellectual growth, the restoration of the national dignity and confidence. The writers of the time were extremely prolific in their production, but nonetheless they kept track of and followed the novelties of European literature, so that they would become part of it one day.

This was also the case with Andersen's debut in Bulgaria. It is quite surprising that his first publication in Bulgarian was not a fairy tale, but a part of the travelogue *In Sweden* (1851), which came out in the magazine 'Nauka' in September 1881. It was edited by some of the most outstanding writers and poets of the period such as Ivan Vazov, nowadays known as 'the patriarch of Bulgarian literature' (according to the textbooks in literature, approved by the Ministry of Education in Bulgaria) and Konstantin Velichkov, a publicist, an author of short stories, essays, plays and literary reviews and a translator. The translation was made most

probably from Russian by Petko Rachov Slaveikov, another exceptional literary person - a poet, publicist, folklorist and politician. Vazov, Velichkov and Slaveikov were not only men of the pen but also active public figures, who participated in the political life of the newly liberated Bulgaria, so they took up themselves the task of forming the literary taste of the Bulgarians. As the most famous fairy tale writer at the time, Andersen's debut in Bulgaria would logically be a collection of his fairy tales and not a travelogue, which was a popular genre in Bulgaria because of its function to entertain, inform and educate the readers about foreign countries, cultures and communities. The Bulgarian translation of *In Sweden* was a real success and made way for his other works. It was naturally followed by a number of Andersen's fairy tales. The first of them was "The Emperor's New Clothes," which came out in the periodical 'Maritsa' on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1883. The name of the translator Dimitur Popov is hidden behind the pseudonym Dachu Popa, a presumption made by Elena Furnadzhieva in her detailed bio-bibliographical research of H.C. Andersen's works in Bulgaria from the 1970s (Baeva & Furnadzhieva, 1975). Dimitur Popov was also an established writer, translator and socially active person, who used a pseudonym for political reasons. Popov was a polyglot and participated in the publication of *Bulgarian Chrestomathy (Bulgarska hristomatia)* edited by Ivan Vazov and Konstantin Velichkov from 1884, where Andersen's first translations were re-printed in the first volume. In her research, Elena Furnadzhieva states that the first poems by Andersen were also translated by Popov, which definitely makes him H.C. Andersen's second translator in Bulgaria.

This is how Andersen's reception started in Bulgaria. The first collection of fairy tales by H.C. Andersen came out in 1893 under the peculiar title *Historical tale of the primitive nightingale and the Chinese emperor*, by the publishing house "Opit" ("Attempt") in the city of Dobrich. Then followed a couple of other fairy tales among which are *The Story of a Mother* with a subtitle *Is there any Doubt about it?*, published in Vratsa in 1895 in a translation from Russian by Ivan Andreichin, who was a teacher in that city and was the most active translator of H.C. Andersen at the time. The peak of his production was the period between 1895 and 1896 when he delivered 27 of H.C. Andersen's fairy tales to be printed in a collection, which came out in 1896. In the preface entitled "On the book and its translation" Andreichin explained his choice emphasizing the exceptional quality of the original texts and the world fame of their author.

Delcho Mavrov also proved to be one of the productive translators of H.C. Andersen – most of the fairy tales, printed by the publishing house "Hemus", which eventually specialized in popularizing Andersen's tales, were translated by him. These include the following: *Under the Willow Tree* in 1921, *The Garden of Paradise* in 1922, *Little Claus and Big Claus* in 1923.

The rest of the fairy tales, which were printed in Sofia in 1931 are thirteen in number, among which are *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Angel*, *Thumbelina*, *The Tinder Box*, *The Little Match Girl* and *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*. Andersen's fairy tales derive from the folk tales in many respects (Brandes, 1964, p. 197) and bear the culture of their origin, which is not a matter of discussion in this paper, but is an important factor that explains the huge interest in them in Bulgaria, where folklore as is the case in many other countries is preserved as a symbol of national identity. During the rule of the Ottoman Empire Bulgarian community and its culture survived namely due to the preservation of the Bulgarian language, folklore and Christian religion. As the folk tale tradition is very strong in Bulgaria the fairy tales turned out to be a broad foundation to build new Bulgarian literature on. Andersen also started writing his tales on the basis of old folk tales and created the genre of the art tale. Although they are art tales, they still bear the universal messages of the folk tales. That is why they can easily travel across cultural areas and are good conductors of universal truths in life. Thus fairy tales are used to create steady principles of conduct, moral and social fundamental values, regardless of the cultural belonging of the reader. Andersen's fairy tales also have a lot to do with their creator's personality. They reflect his individualism and his belonging to the Nordic region and mentality as well. "Og som deres phantastiske Lune er nordisk-dansk, saaledes er deres idylliske Grund-tone særligt dansk." (Brandes, 1964, p. 220)

The Bulgarian writers, who were also Andersen's translators, found that he was probably the best teacher in the way of writing for children. The most profound readers are the translators, who dwell upon the nuances of meaning in the texts and the inner messages. Amongst the pioneer translators of Andersen's works were Dachu Popa, Ivan Andreichin, Delcho Mavrov, Ran Bosilek, Angel Karaliichev, all of whom were distinguished Bulgarian writers, too. Bosilek and Karaliichev are not so productive as translators, but being themselves story-tellers and interpreters of folk motives, gives them a particular feel for the texts of the fairy tales, and their work is more refined and focused on detail. We find resemblance in the means of expression in Andersen's, Bosilek's and Karaliichev's art tales – short descriptions, lively speech of the characters, evasion of abstractions, simple, but strong words that easily get the messages across to their young readers (Brandes, 1964, p. 202). This generation of Bulgarian writers was inspired by Andersen.

The second phase of reception consists of publications and editions of H.C. Andersen's fairy tales from the 1930s until the 1990s, which have a huge impact on the Bulgarian language, the formation of idioms, expressions and set phrases. During this period some of Andersen's characters were transformed into cultural concepts that have become common among the

general public, such as “The Ugly Duckling” and “The Steadfast Tin Soldier”, instead of ‘tin Soldier’ due to a mistake in the first translation of the title etc. However, all the Christian elements in the fairy tales were intentionally omitted in these publications, because of the dominating socialist ideology in Bulgaria from the mid-40s until the fall of the regime in 1989. All the translations, made at the time of socialism in Bulgaria, were not officially censored by the editors, but intentionally or not, the passages including religious elements, such as prayers or psalms or even just a mention of God, were limited or replaced with other images. Sometimes such replacements ruin the whole plot and make the story simply illogical.

In this phase of reception Svetoslav Minkov is one of the most productive translators of Andersen’s fairy tales - over 100, of which 40 for the first time in Bulgarian by the publishing house “Narodva mladej” (“National youth”). He belongs to the second generation of translators, whose work, though not from the original, are still published today. Some extracts by Andersen, included in textbooks for the State schools in Bulgaria, are still in Minkov’s translation. It is no chance that Minkov was also a writer of art tales. He was also inspired by Andersen in the choice of characters, the plot and the bond with the folk tale tradition. (Minkov, 1971)

In 1982 the publishing house “Narodna Kultura” (“National culture”) offered the novel *The Two Baronesses* in translation from Danish by Stoyan Ikonov. This was the first of all Andersen’s works translated from the original, and it constituted an attempt to break the stereotypical image of the great Danish author as only for children. The novel offers lovely descriptions of Denmark, which was a way for the Bulgarian readers to find out more about the author’s native land. It was a huge success and was soon out of print. It threw light upon the many-sided author H.C. Andersen, who tried his hand in many different genres, giving himself the freedom to experiment.

The third phase lasts from the 1990s until the present day and consists mostly of new translations from Danish, which are much closer to the original and are free of political and ideological censorship. This naturally leads to a better understanding of H.C. Andersen’s views of life. In the period between 1996 and 1998 the Publishing house “Bulgarski hudojnik” (“Bulgarian Artist”) came out with a three-volume collection of H.C. Andersen’s fairy tales translated from the originals. The translator is Petur Milkov Petrov, who demonstrated very good knowledge of Danish, but his attempt to deliver the content as closely as possible to the original resulted in an awkward word-by-word translation in places. However, he managed to expand the scope and modernize the translations of Andersen’s fairy tales in Bulgarian. These translations have a new revised edition, which came out at the end of 2017 by the publishing house “Enthusiast”.

Another achievement in this respect is the translation of Vladimir Strariradev of 69 of Andersen's most famous fairy tales from 2005, published by "Trud". This is the latest and probably the best translation of Andersen so far. The translations are close to the original, they manage to deliver the different nuances of meaning but at the same time are true to the already established set phrases and well-familiar titles of the fairy tales, which speak for themselves to the Bulgarian readers, although some of them, as mentioned before, are not strictly correct. The translations of H.C. Andersen in Bulgaria thus prove to be yet another means of cultural exchange, overcoming the limitations of regional belonging and national identity, while transferring humanistic universal values.

H.C. Andersen has become an essential part of Bulgarian language and culture. His works have already started living their own lives and have captured some of the characteristics of the culture they are distributed in, through a great number of adaptations, performances and drawings in the new publications. Examples of these are "The Ugly Duckling," "The Little Match Girl," "Little Ida's Flowers," "The Emperor's New Clothes" and "The Little Mermaid." They are perpetually put on stage or interpreted in the theatre, cartoons and even in advertisements in the media. Crossing not only geographical and political borders, but the borders of his own prejudices and fear of otherness, H.C. Andersen undertook one of his longest journeys, fully conscious of all the dangers and uncertainty that lay ahead. Nonetheless, one cannot find a single sign of hesitation in his travelogue *A Poet's Bazaar*.

In Andersen's opinion travelling is a way of living. The acceptance of a culture does not consist of merely being physically there, but being able to take in the differences, to let them become part of you. To him it has more to do with striving to find what is common between people and nations rather than outlining the odd and strange. This leads to a broadening of the views of life in general. All in all, Andersen travelled approximately ten years to many places around Europe (Oxfeldt, 2010, p. 6). This enriched and gave new meaning to the Danish writer's values and was a kind of 'bildung' and self-development journey, which he interpreted in his works.

Staying apolitical Hans Christian Andersen intentionally or not fulfills his humane mission – to send messages of tolerance and love to fellow-humans. Even his religion is humane and non-orthodox. He was convinced that there is only one God and that he is merciful while the human soul is immortal and cosmic. Such a position seems quite natural in our times when faith has become a deeply personal experience. He preaches his faith by posing indirect questions to his readers, not trying to answer them all himself. He shows great tolerance to different religions and cultures (deMylius, 2006).

He was ready to cross his inner personal barriers, led by the desire to learn more and his passion for new experiences. He managed to break with his belonging predominantly to the Scandinavian North. As a really modern European he freed himself from the obligatory image of 'the civilized man' and opened his senses and mind to the beauty and wisdom of the Orient and the Balkans. He experienced travelling around the world physically, though sometimes it was unpleasant and exhausting, but it was a way to overcome the limitations of regional belonging and national values. He opened himself up and out to the world and the world opened up for him. Andersen's attitude to unfamiliar languages, cultures and religions led him to personal and artistic growth and maturity thus enriching his works thematically and aesthetically. This makes him one of the most cherished writers of all times and transforms him into a trans-cultural phenomenon. (Brandes, 1964)

These cosmopolitan views and values make Hans Christian Andersen even more relevant today, now that we are witnesses to huge migration, global changes of the ethnic, religious and political structure of Europe, transforming it into a new community, which we have to adapt ourselves to live in.

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