

Translation Studies in Bratislava
at the Institute of World Literature SAS:
Facts and Figures

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD LITERATURE

The Institute of World Literature is a research and, at the same time, training center that belongs to the Slovak Academy of Sciences like a number of other research institutes that pursue general history, art history, sociology, ethnology but also mathematics or biology, or, in other words, social and exact sciences.

The Institute of World Literature was established in 1991 after the splitting of the former Institute of Literary Scholarship SAS into two parts – the Institute of World Literature and the Institute of Slovak Literature. Their forerunner was the Institute of World Literature and Languages SAS (1964 – 1973), which was founded by Mikuláš Bakoš, a significant personality in Slovak literary studies.

The Institute of World Literature focuses on research into the history and theory of various literatures - American, English, French, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Italian, Nordic and Baltic, Latin American and other literatures.

At present, its main emphasis is on the sphere of literary, technical and medial translation, the history of the reception of foreign literatures in Slovakia, theory and history of European literatures of the 18th up to the 20th century, comparative research and the theory of literary studies. Because all the researchers working at the Institute also teach at universities and schools in Slovakia and abroad, the Institute works with young people as well. At the same time it is a training center for education of young scientific and university staff through doctoral and post-doctoral study.

The Institute of World Literature publishes its own journal called *World Literature Studies*, and cooperates on research projects and the organization of conferences and scientific discussions with schools and research centers in Slovakia and in various countries all over the world.

TRANSLATION STUDIES AT THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD LITERATURE FOUNDATIONS OF RESEARCH

One of the most important projects the Institute of World Literature is presently involved in is called History and Theory of Artistic Translation in Slovakia and Abroad. Because translation is a permanent phenomenon in Slovak culture and history, this question has been dealt with during the whole period of the Institute's existence.

The beginnings of research in the field of translation fall into the 1960s and 1970s when A. Popovič completed his scientific training at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Several of the present Institute's staff were in the late 1970s (and later) students of A. Popovič and participants in Summer schools of translation. Translation studies began to flourish at the Institute mainly within comparative literature studies which were in the 1980s and the 1990s established by Dionýz Ďurišin, a well-known comparatist (also in the International Association of Comparatists ICLA/AILC. D). Ďurišin was a contemporary of A. Popovič. He dealt with translation in his own theoretical conception which studied interconnectedness of various literatures. The expression of his thinking was a dynamic definition of terms like interliterary process, contacts, genetic and typological connections, centrism, world literature or interliterary communities, which he had worked up in his self-contained taxonomy. Interliterary communities he perceived as groupings of various literatures bound together by means of varyingly intensive relations emerging on the basis of given facts - language (association of the literatures of Commonwealth, literatures in Spain and in Latin America, etc.), common history (literatures of the nations of the former Austrian-Hungarian empire), common territory (literatures of the Balkans), political development (literatures of the former Soviet Union, present Russia), etc. Interliterary communities change in time, they are created and cease to exist, but the cognition of literatures within the association in the time of its existence is exceptionally intense.

D. Ďurišin did not draw on French theory (*Littérature comparée*, R. Étiemble), refusing himself any function or existence of such influence. His works were translated into German and English (G. Toury, for example, refers to them in his monograph *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, 1980: 30).

Research into translation at the Institute of World Literature has developed on the basis of Popovič's communication theory, Ďurišin's theory of interliterary communities and literary-historical conception of a Czech theoretician of translation from

approximately the same period, Jiří Levý. To a significant degree also traditions of the Czech interwar structuralism of the 20th century and the Russian formalist school contributed to it.

THE DEVELOPMENT AND THEMES OF RESEARCH

Drawing on its accentuation of historicity, the Institute of World Literature of the Slovak Academy of Sciences is focused – as it is stated in several summarisations of Slovak translatology from the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries – on the analysis of literary and cultural-historical relationships of translation activities. The historicity of the thinking on translation within its framework also draws on the traditions of D. Ďurišin's systematics as well as on reception research in general, which influenced the nature of research of foreign literatures in the 1970s and 1980s. Originally conducted in the Institute of Literary Studies which was artificially created in the normalisation times (especially 1970s), this research was, though, more or less forced upon the Institute, and was perceived as a secondary one, adding the exemplification material to the “main” research interest – to the primary, central history of Slovak literature. Nowadays it may seem paradoxical – the “world literature” seen as a complement to Slovak literature – but in those times it was for the formal History of Slovak Literature in the 1960s and 1970s considered the necessity, logically following from traditions of the positivistic history of Slovak literature.

Experience of the mentioned reception studies shows that every reception environment, every cultural space, articulates for itself its own idea, both of world literature and of individual foreign literatures as well. It is one of the starting points also of current research in the Institute of World Literature SAS in Bratislava.

I will now try to provide a brief summary of a collective experience of research into history of translation in the form of six volumes since now from the edition *A Brief History of Artistic Translation in Slovakia* (*Stručné dejiny umeleckého prekladu na Slovensku*), so as to throw light on the specific features of translation activity as a way of communication among nations, languages and cultures in the Slovak cultural milieu:

1. Koprda, P.: *Italian Literature in Slovak Culture* (*Talianska literatúra v slovenskej kultúre*);
2. Jankovič, J.: *Croatian Literature in Slovak Culture I (till 1938)* (*Chorvátska literatúra v slovenskej kultúre I. (do roku 1938)*);
3. Collective: *Russian Literature in Slovak Culture in 1836 – 1996* (*Ruská literatúra v slovenskej kultúre v rokoch 1836–1996*);
4. Tomiš, K.: *Hungarian Literature in Slovak Culture (1860 – 1918)*, (*Maďarská literatúra v slovenskej kultúre (1860–1918)*);
5. Vajdová, L.: *Romanian Literature in Slovak Culture (1860 – 1918)* (*Rumunská literatúra v slovenskej kultúre (1890–1990)*);
6. Jankovič, J.: *Croatian Literature in Slovak Culture II (1939 – 1948)* (*Chorvátska literatúra v slovenskej kultúre II. (1939–1948)*); all: Bratislava: IWL SAS, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2000, 2002.

The other outcome were several publications, studies and monographs dealing with the reception of Spanish, Russian, German, Bulgarian, Romanian, Italian, Polish

and other literatures in the Slovak milieu (see works by authors such as L. Franek, J. Jankovič, P. Koprda, M. Kusá, L. Vajdová, K. Tomiš, M. Žitný, P. Winczer and others, in the bibliography section of this issue as well).

These publications represent personal “histories” of foreign literatures in Slovakia:

1. Koška, J.: *Reception as Creation. Slovak-Bulgarian Literary Relations (1826 – 1989)* (Recepcia ako tvorba. Slovensko-bulharské literárne vzťahy (1826–1989). Bratislava: Veda and the Institute of World Literature SAS, 2003;

2. Truhlářová, J.: *On the Roads to French Literature: Chapters in the History of Translation and Reception in Slovakia* (Na cestách k francúzskej literatúre: kapitoly z dejín prekladu a recepcie na Slovensku). Bratislava: Veda, 2008. 212 pages. ISBN 978-80-224-1017-5.

The study of translations in contacts and relations between literatures determined the character of the whole center. Several factors contributed to that:

1. All participants in the project were and are active translators who are aware also of the practical problems translation activity brings along. This gives them a chance to prove their own opinions and try their own approaches, also when working with students at universities.

2. The foundations for this task were the comparative research in literature, the theory of translation by A. Popovič and the stylistic research by F. Miko in the Division of Literary Communication and Experimental Methodology at the Pedagogical Faculty in Nitra. The theoretical foundations are no longer shown directly or literally, but provide a solid ground and criteria for the study of even the most recent opinions on translation emerging elsewhere.

3. The issue of reception draws the attention of Slovak researcher staff to the fact that it is not sufficient to examine the linguistic form of the translation transfer, but that it is important to perceive translation in broader connections. One of such connections is, for example, literary history but there are also others like culture, events in the society, interdisciplinary overlaps within translation or the function of institutions in society, highlighted especially by the break-up of the block of socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

At the present times, the research has become diverse, shifting its focus into the field of culture and beginning to deal also with expert or technical translation, translation in the media as well as interpreting. In this sphere many things have changed. Translatological research has realized that the changed situation in Slovak culture after 1989, and likewise in the world, led to differing strategies and functions of translation. I mean, for example, not only the dominance of technical translation, interpreting, translation for the media, but, above all, also the onset of non-literary factors involved in the process of translation. The research staff have addressed bilingualism, plurilingualism, multiculturalism, as well as other partial themes, such as parallel and repetitive translations, translations of local works to a foreign language in the environment of its origin (K. Bednárová), translation in the media, questions of institutions and literary life (M. Kusá), and the like. This also led to an elaboration of one more sphere - the criticism of translation that works with analyses of norms and values (B. Suwara).

With the opening of borders Slovak tradition came into a direct contact with what

was happening in the world translatology. Research at the Institute of World Literature SAS observes, compares, analyses and broadens it (a collective publication called *Thinking about Translation* which captures the development from the Skopos Theorie via sociological concepts up to the end of the 20th century, as well as the situation in Russian translatology; see the bibliography section). However, it is necessary to bring that knowledge to schools and universities as well. There emerge new tasks aimed at making classic texts of the world translatology available in the Slovak milieu. A similar project has been prepared in the Translation Studies Centre in Banská Bystrica. This effort is also accompanied with the study of the traditions of translational research. There emerged several studies and works as well. This topic is especially dealt with by M. Kusá.

Within the research on the reception of foreign literatures in Slovakia we have gathered a lot of particular literary material. A very important outcome of the constant research on reception is the still continuing project of the literary-historical mapping of translation from individual languages, which has a form both of individual volumes, the so-called brief history of artistic translation in Slovakia (Italian, Russian, Romanian, Hungarian, Croatian), and several monographs (Koška – Bulgarian literature, Truhlářová – French literature, and the like). This material is used in other works as well, as for example recently in another, very topical task, the preparation of the dictionary of *Slovak translators of artistic literature* (Slovník slovenských prekladateľov umeleckej literatúry – M. Žitný, M. Kusá, K. Bednárová, O. Kovačičová and others). The dictionary describes translation activities in Slovakia from the 19th century to these days and it will contain about 250 entries, translators from foreign literatures into the Slovak language. Each entry is supplemented with a bibliography of translated works; a part of the dictionary will include a study that will explain untypical and peripheral phenomena, or, on the contrary, frequent and repetitive processes.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Since the foundation of the Institute of World Literature in its present form, i.e. since 1991, several research projects have been dealt with there, each of them leading to the publication of studies, proceedings, or monographs. Financial resources for research and publication are obtained from a grant agency for science and research (VEGA) as well as from sponsors.

Below we list an inventory of research projects from the field of translation studies resulting in publications.

1. *History and Theory of Artistic Translation in Slovakia in the Context of the History of Reception of Foreign Literatures* (Dejiny a teória umeleckého prekladu na Slovensku v kontexte dejín recepcie inonárodných literatúr). 1992-1994. Main coordinator: P. Winczer and K. Kenížová-Bednárová. The outcome was two collections of studies by several authors (*Issues in the Theory and History of Translation in Slovakia I, II*. See the bibliography section in this issue).

2. *History and Theory of Translation in Slovakia* (Dejiny a teória prekladu na Slovensku). 1995-1998. Project leader: K. Kenížová-Bednárová, M. Kusá. The outcome was a collection of studies called *Issues in the Theory and History of Translation in Slovakia III* and the first individual and collective monographs devoted to the issue of

translation and reception (Kusá, Franek, etc.)

3. *Reception and Translation of Foreign Literatures in the Context of Slovak Culture* (Theoretical and Historical Aspect), (Recepcia a preklad inonárodných literatúr v kontexte slovenskej kultúry (teoretický a historický aspekt). 1999-2001. Project leader: M. Kusá. The outcome was a series of monographs by authors like J. Jankovič, P. Koprda, L. Vajdová, K. Tomiš, M. Žitný, P. Winczer and others, mentioned above.

4. *Theoretical and Literary Historical Aspects of Translation, Translation Activity, Translation Studies and Reception of Literary Theoretical Texts* (Teoretické a literárno-historické aspekty prekladu, prekladania, prekladateľstva a recepcie literárnych textov). 2002-2004. Project leader: M. Kusá. The outcome was a number of publications by J. Jankovič. Other monographs - M. Kusá, B. Suwara and others.

5. *Translation and National Culture. Circumstances, Relations, Connections, Personalities, Terms* (Preklad a národná kultúra. Okolnosti, vzťahy, súvislosti, osobnosti, pojmy). 2005-2007. Project leader: M. Kusá. Outcome: *Thinking about Translation* (Myslenie o preklade), a collection of studies in world translatology, Ed. L. Vajdová, 2007.

6. *Translation, History, Culture. The Status of Translation, Transformations of its Forms and Scientific Reflection in Time* (Preklad, dejiny, kultúra. Status prekladu, transformácie jeho podôb a vedeckej reflexie v čase). 2008-2010. Project leader: M. Kusá from the IWL SAS, E. Gromová from the University in Nitra. Outcome: *Preklad a kultúra III* (Translation and Culture III), in print, a collection of studies from a common conference that took place in Nitra in 2009.

In addition to collective works, we could mention several monographs dealing with the issue of translation, or book works by individual researchers, experts in various literatures (see the bibliography section in this issue):

- L. Franek *The Style of Translating Poetry. Studies in the Development, Theory and Criticism of Paul Claudel's Slovak Translations* (Štýl prekladu. Vývinovo-teoretická a kritická analýza slovenských prekladov Paula Claudela), 1997.

- E. Maliti *The tabooed translator Zora Jesenská* (Tabuizovaná prekladateľka Zora Jesenská) a monograph dedicated to one of the significant translators from Russian literature in Slovakia, 2007.

- M. Kusá *Literary Life, Literary Events and Literary Process. Intraliterary, Extraliterary and Interliterary Contexts of 20th Century Russian Literature* (Literárny život, literárne dianie, literárny proces. Vnútroliterárne, mimoliterárne a medziliterárne súvislosti ruskej literatúry 20. storočia), 1997. A work devoted to the translation of the so-called popular literature, film and the role of institutions in the process of translation.

- J. Zambor *Translation as Art* (Preklad ako umenie). 2000. A work devoted to the analysis and criticism of translation of poetry.

- J. Jankovič *Croatian Literature in Slovak Culture II (1939-1948)* (Chorvátska literatúra v slovenskej kultúre II. (1939-1948), 2002. A work dealing with translation from Croatian literature in the politically exposed period of World War II.

- B. Suwara *On Translation – a Study in Theory* (O preklade bez prekladu), 2003. A work dealing with the legacy of A. Popovič's theory in Slovak thinking.

- *Thinking about Translation* (Myslenie o preklade), L. Vajdová ed., a collection of studies from the sphere of thinking about translation in the world (Skopos Theory, Polysystem Theory, Manipulation School, Tradition in England, Tradition in Russia), the

publication received an award from the Slovak Association of Translators in 2007.

At present two more books on the issue of translation are to be published in the Institute of World Literature SAS and the most recent research project. The first one deals with Russian literature (*Textual and non-Textual Determinants of Literary Translation*, Textové a mimotextové determinanty literárneho prekladu, O. Kovačičová) and the other one with pragmatics, or cultural, social and literary contexts of translation (*Seven Lives of Translation*, Sedem životov prekladu, L. Vajdová).

As we have mentioned, the Institute of World Literature SAS publishes its own quarterly journal called *World Literature Studies*. This has been opened some space also for the mapping of research in the field of translatology to which two issues will be devoted. The first one, altogether the third issue this year (3/2009), deals with the questions of authorial translation by writers from Central Europe living in France, for example M. Kundera (K. Bednárová), and with interdisciplinary aspects of criticism of translation. It also brings a material study (B. Suwara) and an analysis of translation of poetry from the Czech language to the Slovak language, which are two both linguistically and culturally very similar languages (M. Žitný). Also foreign authors have contributed to this issue, for example F. Wuilmart who gave his lecture entitled *La traduction littéraire bien comprise: Un atout pour l'Europe* at the Institute of World Literature SAS in 2008 as well as young researchers from abroad, like James W. Underhill from Grenoble or V. Consculluela from Bordeaux.

Also the next issue of the journal is devoted to the questions of translation, but unlike the previous one, it maps the situation in Slovakia. Its aim is to introduce the past and the present of translation studies in the Slovak culture and science and, at the same time, to bring a maximum of information about the translation studies centers in Slovakia. There are several of them, as we have mentioned several times already: at Comenius University in Bratislava, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, University of Prešov and at the Institute of World Literature SAS in Bratislava. The closing part of the issue will list a bibliography of works about translation published in Slovakia. There are many of them, but almost none are well known abroad. This is the reason for putting together the WLS 4/2009 issue.

The basic condition for working in the Translation Studies Centre at the Institute of World Literature SAS in Bratislava is cooperation with individual centers at other universities and workplaces. Experts from Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Prešov, etc. participate in the projects dealt with there. Together they organize conferences and scholarly meetings as well as discussions about the themes of books that have already been published. On the other hand, the members of the Institute lecture for example at the Summer School of Translation or they take part in the organization of life in the translators' community (directing professional associations, membership in juries which give awards for translation, in juries of contests for young translators, giving awards for translation, etc.). As we have mentioned already, the Institute of World Literature SAS, in cooperation with Faculty of Arts in Bratislava, has a right to offer doctoral and post-doctoral programs. This means that it gets into contact not only with students, but also with the advisers of their works at various universities because defenses of dissertations often take place here. Apart from that, the Institute also keeps inviting experts from abroad. Recently, for example, we have begun coop-

eration with Belgian translatology, but important personalities come here also from Germany, Austria, Italy, Romania, France, etc.

PROFILES

Prof. PhDr. Mária Kusá, CSc. Professor at the Department of Russian Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava. She also works at the Institute of World Literature SAS. In her research and teaching work she concentrates on the problematic of 20th century Russian literature and on the translation of literary and non-literary texts. She is the author of dozens of academic articles from these fields. She published two monographs: *Literary Life, Literary Events and Literary Process. Intraliterary, Extraliterary and Interliterary Contexts of 20th Century Russian Literature* (*Literárny život, literárne dianie, literárny proces. Vnútroliterárne, mimoliterárne a medziliterárne súvislosti ruskej literatúry 20. storočia*), 1997; *The Translation as a Part of the Cultural Space History* (*Preklad ako súčasť dejín kultúrneho priestoru*). Bratislava : Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, 2005. She translates literary-critical and literary texts, published in book form (co-translator of the anthology *Ruské kvety zla* and others) and in magazines (*Revue svetovej literatúry*, *Rak*, *Dotyky* and others). She is the Project leader in majority of IWL SAS grants on the translation and the main cooperator with the Translation studies centres at the Universities in Bratislava and Nitra. She publishes scholarly works both in Slovakia and abroad.

PhDr. Ján Jankovič, DrSc. Member-correspondent of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, a graduate from the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovak and History, Croatian and Serbian). He has worked as an editor in magazines, an editor in chief and director of the Slovak Academy of Sciences publishing house. At present he is a research fellow at the Institute of World Literature, Slovak Academy of Sciences. He founded the Association for Friends of the Nations of Yugoslavia; he serves as a vice chairman of the Slovak Committee of Slavists and as an honorary member of the Association of Croatian Translators of Belles-Lettres. At present he is the most productive translator of Croatian, Serbian, Macedonian and Slovenian literature into Slovak. He also deals with the history of translation and theory. He is an author of several scientific monographs, books, essays and books of a journalistic character. For his work in translation, literature and science he has received awards in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia.

Doc. PhDr. Katarína Bednárová, CSc. Researcher at the Institute of World Literature (chairwoman of the Scientific Board) and, at the same time, she lectures on French literature, the theory of literature and runs a seminar on artistic translation from French at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University. She is interested in the theoretical questions of translation, lectures and actively works as a translator. Her main topics are: translation of dialogues, series translation, history of artistic translation and authorial translation. At present she is a member of an international scientific team in a project called *Histoire de la traduction en Europe médiane* at Centre d'étude de l'Europe médiane (CEEM), INALCO, Paris. Since 2005 she has been representing SSPUL in the European Council of Associations of Artistic Translators CEATL. She is a secretary of the executive board of CEATL. For her translations of the works of M. Tournier and S.

Beckett she has received awards from the Literary Fund. She is the Project leader in several IWL SAS and PFCU grant grants. She publishes scholarly works both in Slovakia and France and translates French fiction.

PhDr. Libuša Vajdová, CSc. Researcher at the Institute of World Literature SAS. She lectured at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava. She also works at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. She deals with questions of comparative literature, translation, reception, culture, historiography and interdisciplinarity in literary studies. She published a summary work about Slovak Romanian Studies in Bucharest (1991), a monograph entitled Romanian Literature in the Slovak Culture. 1890-1990 (Rumunská literatúra v slovenskej kultúre. 1890 -1990. (2000)) and proceedings from conferences (in cooperation with EHESS in Paris). On the issue of translatology abroad she published a collective monograph called Thinking about Translation (Myslenie o preklade, 2007). She publishes scholarly works both in Slovakia and abroad and translates Romanian fiction and poetry.

Translated by M. Uhrová

TRANSLATOLÓGIA V BRATISLAVE V ÚSTAVE SVETOVEJ LITERATÚRY SAV

Výskum dejín a teórie inonárodných literatúr. Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV ako centrum výskumu prekladu. Spolupráca s translatoľgickými centrami na Slovensku a v zahraničí. Analýza prekladov z cudzích literatúr. Dejiny prekladu. Recepcia cudzích literatúr. Literárny život a preklad. Preklady v médiách. Reflexia tradícií výskumu. Publikčná činnosť. Výskumné úlohy. Konferencie.

Ústav svetovej literatúry je výskumné a školiace pracovisko Slovenskej akadémie vied. Jeho základy položil M. Bakoš (1964) a vedeckú prípravu tu absolvoval v 60.-70. rokoch aj slovenský teoretik prekladu A. Popovič. ÚSvL SAV sa sústreďuje na výskum v okruhu viacerých literárnovedných disciplín (teória literatúry, dejiny literatúry, komparatistika, translatoľgia a iné). Zaoberá sa dejinami inonárodných literatúr, teoretickým myslením, poetikou, ale aj súvislosťami s inými humanitnými disciplínami. Oblasť komparatistiky rozvíjal v jeho rámci najmä D. Ďurišin, ktorý prispel aj k formovaniu osobitného prístupu vo výskume prekladu, ako aj štúdium recepcie cudzích literatúr na Slovensku. V súčasnosti sa výskum v oblasti translatoľgie rozvíja v smeroch ako analýza prekladu z cudzích literatúr, jeho dejiny, recepčné procesy pri preklade, autorský preklad, úloha inštitúcií a literárneho života v preklade, preklady v médiách, pragmatika prekladu. ÚSvL SAV spolupracuje so zahraničnými výskumnými pravisťami a jeho pracovníci sa pravidelne prezentujú v zahraničí formou prednášok a účasti na konferenciách. Rieši výskumné granty, poriada konferencie, vydáva knižné publikácie a ústavný časopis World Literature Studies.

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