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Elfriede Mader, *Rückläufiges Wörterbuch des Slowenischen* [= *Klagenfurter Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, Slawistische Reihe, 5*]. Klagenfurt: Klagenfurter Sprachwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft, 1981. 244 pp. Austrian Schillings 200.00.

In his introduction to this book, Otto Kronsteiner points out that, since Vasmer's of Russian published in 1957, we have seen backwards dictionaries of Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, Ukrainian, Polish, Bulgarian and Czech; but hitherto, none for Slovene. This book is designed to fill that gap, but (as is indeed suggested by Kronsteiner) only temporarily, for the following reason:

Backwards dictionaries are normally re-compilations of the lemmata in standard ("forwards") dictionaries. The monumental *Obratnyj slovar' russkogo jazyka* (Moscow: Sovetskaja ènciklopedija, 1974), for example, is based on four standard Soviet Russian dictionaries, including the 17-volume one of 1948/64, and contains about 125,000 words. For Slovene, Mader (under Kronsteiner's supervision) rejected Pleteršnik's *Slovensko-nemški slovar'* (1894) because it was unsuitable, being outdated and full of too much dialect material. The Slovene Academy's *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika* would have been ideal but was of course (and will for some time be) incomplete. The interim choice fell, then, on France Tomšič's *Slovensko-nemški slovar*, which contains only "about 40,000 words" (a rough calculation of the number of words in Mader's book results in 36,500).

Admittedly, this is a vast number of words for a single person to tabulate; in theory at least, however, it must be pointed out that the *Slovenski pravopis* of 1962 contains over 100,000 words, and would have served as a much better basis for a backwards dictionary of the language (words marked as non-standard could have been omitted). Nevertheless, this is a very useful first version.



The compiler had three decisions to make. First, she chose to include the accent-markings from Tomšič: good. Second, she decided to list all homonymic forms (thus, *měča měča*, *sód sód sód*, and so on): good again. Third, she chose to omit the (minimal) grammatical information given by Tomšič—viz., the genders of nouns: and this was surely a mistake. (The problem of having apparently endless columns of *-a* words marked as feminines, and so on, could be avoided by marking the genders only in the less predictable instances—e.g., masculines in *-a*; feminines in *-e*, *-i*; etc., etc.).

The principal use for a dictionary of this kind is a grammatical one (other than this, for searching out rhymes, and for scrabble-type word games, there can be few uses.) Backwards dictionaries are obviously invaluable for working out the list-frequency and productivity of different suffixes (in those languages, like Slovene, that employ suffixes). To this end, the author has appended (pp. 221-243) a section headed "Statistische Auswertung." This contains, inter alia, the following: tabulations of the number of words ending in every combination of two, and of three letters; lists of the 20 most common final-two-letter combinations, and of the 50 most common final-three-letter combinations; and a tabulation headed "Die Häufigkeit der Suffixe" (222-225). All except the last-named are unexceptionable; the last-named is, however, misleading.

This tabulation begins with "-ba 208:" the reader immediately supposes that Tomšič's dictionary contains 208 words with the GRAMMATICAL suffix *-ba*. A glance at pp. 1-2 of the backwards lists shows, however, that there are only 208 words ALL TOLD that end in *-ba*, including those where this is obviously a suffix (*odlôčba*, *prenarédba*, *spremémba*, etc.) and those where it is not (*bába*, *obá*, *gúba*, etc.). The tabulation, then, is of the most common word-final letter-combinations. As such, it is extremely useful (under *-ca* we find *-ica*, *-anca*, *-enca*; under *-ica* we find *-ičica*, *-nica*, *-arica*; and so on)—but it is only the first step towards a tabulation of actual SUFFIXES. Even *-ica* is misleading, since it includes *škíca*!

These two criticisms aside, Mader is to be praised for the dogged and unexciting work that must have gone into this dictionary. Until we have a version based on the Academy's *Slovar*, it will fill the gap extremely well. The typeface is easy to read, and the layout clear.

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