

Perhaps this is better: is there an end to the suffering, or a purpose to it? Salvation or rescue? Salvation from the suffering or salvation, as Avsenik Nabergoj (but definitely not all of us) would argue, through the suffering? At least two camps continue to present themselves readily: that of political engagement and that of metaphysics or Christianity. This book, an addition to the latter school, which is in turn already well rooted in many Anglophone understandings of Cankar, is a most welcome addition to the meager but growing library of English-language critical works on Slovene literature. It is hard to believe, but this is the first book in English devoted exclusively to the works of Ivan Cankar! Slovene literature deserves many more studies and translations, and Cankar deserves much more consideration.

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Martin Grum. *Slovenski prevajalski leksikon 1550–1945. Poskusni zvezek A–J*. Ljubljana: Društvo slovenskih književnih prevajalcev and Inštitut za kulturno zgodovino ZRC SAZU, 2007. 263 pp., €20.00 [= \$25.68] (paper). ISBN: 978-961-6515-04-7.

In 1830, Pushkin observed that *Переводчики — почтовые лошади просвещения* ‘Translators are the post-horses of culture’. Martin Grum, an independent consultant at the Institute of Cultural History in Ljubljana, has taken it upon himself to catalogue (and thereby recognize) some of these “post-horses” in what promises to be the most comprehensive compilation of biographical and bibliographic data on Slovene translators to date, represented in this trial volume (A–J) of an encyclopedia of Slovene translators active between 1550 and 1945 (*Slovenski prevajalski leksikon 1550–1945*; hereinafter *SPL*). Grum is especially well-suited for this task, with a bibliography of his own stretching back nearly three decades, including extensive work on bibliographies of various sorts and profiles of numerous translators. Of course, he has been able to draw upon this wealth of information in compiling the present volume.

In Slovenia, where talented people have often worn more than one hat, it sometimes seems that almost everyone is a translator these days. Official obituaries and biographies are filled with formulations like “literarni zgodovinar, prevajalec, esejist, publicist, literarni kritik, urednik in

ugankar.”¹ It is therefore expedient that Grum has limited his range to translators that were active only up to 1945; otherwise, the scope of his task would increase enormously. It is also because of this limitation that much of Grum’s own biographical and bibliographic research on more recent translators—published systematically and alphabetically since his 1998 article on Drago Bajt (1948–)—is not included in *SPL*.

The individual entries in the lexicon are consistently structured as follows: (a) the translator’s name, date and place of birth, and date and place of death; (b) the languages that he or she translated from and into; (c) a biographical sketch; (d) pseudonyms used by the translator; (e) sources consulted; and (f) a bibliography of the translator’s works. This last feature is intended to be as exhaustive as possible, and is further subdivided into books, periodical publications, and plays. In some cases, the pseudonyms may be as simple as surnames or initials; in other cases, they are pseudo-Latin coinages (e.g., *Kramerius* = Anton Dermota, 1876–1914), translations of names (e.g., *J. Carpenter* = Josip Cimperman, 1847–1893), flights of romantic fancy (e.g., *Snežinka* = Lojzka Brus, 1909–1965), or even numbers, Greek letters, or symbols (e.g., + + + = Rado Bednařik, 1902–1975). Sorting out such puzzles is clearly a task best tackled by a professional, and it is hoped that the final version of *SPL* will also include an index of these pseudonyms.

For certain translators, *SPL* includes important unpublished translations preserved only in manuscript form. The translators’ bibliographies also include both literary and non-literary translations (5). Thus, for example, *SPL* informs us about Jožef Ignaci Fanton de Brunn (1754–1795), a doctor and veterinarian that translated two volumes by the eminent eighteenth-century veterinarian Johann Gottlieb Wolstein. Awareness of such material in Slovene fills a gap in what is otherwise a popular (but inaccurate) notion that written Slovene flourished in the late sixteenth century, completely disappeared for over two hundred years, and then burst onto the scene again in the nineteenth century.

Certain omissions are noticeable from a casual glance at the (growing) list of Slovene translators covered in the Slovene version of *Wikipedia*.² For example, Imre Augustič (1837–1879)³ translated Hungarian works (including the national poet Sándor Petőfi) into Slovene and Karel “Kajuh” Destovnik (1922–1944)⁴ translated Czech works (focusing on communist writers and poets) into Slovene, but neither is included in *SPL*. Such omissions likely reflect the work-in-progress nature of this trial volume of *SPL* and will be addressed in the final version.

¹ See the entry at http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drago_Bajt.

² See the list at http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kategorija:Slovenski_prevajalci.

³ See the entry at http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imre_Augusti%C4%8D.

⁴ See the entry at http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karel_Destovnik_-_Kajuh.

One feature that sets *SPL* apart is its focus on the translation work of persons not usually recognized for such efforts. Thus one finds the poet Anton Aškerc (1856–1912), the linguist Anton Bajec (1897–1985), the missionary and bishop Frederic Baraga (1797–1868), the writer France Bevk (1890–1970), the veterinarian and politician Janez Bleiweis (1808–1881), and the composer Dragotin Cvetko (1911–1993) covered in this volume, to name but a few.

As Grum notes in his introduction, many translators remain anonymous to this day because their translations simply were not credited or appeared under a code or pseudonym that cannot be matched to any known person. The final version of the encyclopedia will include a bibliography of such unattributed works (5). Other features that the final version will feature are an index of authors' works translated, an index of languages translated from and to, and a complete list of the sources consulted (5). As Grum mentioned at a press conference at the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences (SAZU) on 29 January 2009, the current trial volume represents about one-third of the planned work, and the final version will include approximately 1,200 entries.

SPL will serve as a valuable supplement to other basic biographical works, especially biographical lexicons such as *Osebnosti: Veliki slovenski biografski leksikon* (Stanonik and Brenk 2008). Inevitably, general reference works either omit certain persons or focus on other aspects of their work. For example, the first two translators in *SPL*—Jože Abram (1875–1938) and France Ačko (1904–1974)—were not included volume one of the *Enciklopedija Slovenije* (1987), likely because of ideological opposition to their religious backgrounds (both were priests). Both men were later included in the supplement to the encyclopedia published in 2002. Both are also absent from the *Leksikon Sova* desk encyclopedia (Ogrizek 2006), whereas the *Slovenski veliki leksikon* (Kocjan-Barle and Bajt 2004) omits Abram but includes Ačko, focusing however only on his (better-known) musical career.

In comparison to other reference works, *SPL* generally includes a noticeably more complete bibliography, reflecting Grum's other scholarly work. At the same time, *SPL* is sometimes short on biographical details that are available elsewhere. For example, *SPL* sums up the life of Kristina Brenk (1911–) in three terse sentences. It would have been interesting to note that she served as a courier for the Partisans during the Second World War and that she was a frequent companion of the author Prežihov Voranc.⁵ At the same time, a good encyclopedist knows when to stop without including the trivial details that often drift into *Wikipedia*, such as the article on Angelo Cerkvenc (1894–1981), which states that he was attracted to the

⁵ See the entry at http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristina_Brenk. These details are also absent from her biography in the *Enciklopedija Slovenije* (1: 366–367).

life of a sailor as a boy and that he had to walk fifteen kilometers to school every day.⁶

As might be expected from a work in progress with such a wealth of detail, there are a number of typos and other minor errors in *SPL*. For example, Louis Adamič's birth date is incorrectly given as the 21st (instead of 23rd) of March (10), the words *Montenegrin* and *Slavs* are written in lowercase in Louis Adamič's bibliography (11), the name of the Danish writer Martin Andersen Nexø is transposed and misspelled as *Nexø Andersen, Martin* (13), the Slovene village of *Hotedršica* is misspelled *Hotederšica* (16), Upton Sinclair's 1931 novel *The Wet Parade* is misspelled *parad* (72), the newspaper *Laibacher Zeitung* is repeatedly misspelled *Zaitung* (153 ff.), the word *slave* appears as *sclave* in the subtitle of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (198), and the Austrian village of *Sicheldorf* is misspelled *Siceldorf* (212). End-of-line hyphenation sometimes violates the rules of the languages it is applied to (this is a frequent typesetting problem in Slovene publications); for example, English *adventu-res* (35) and *Pompe-ii* (160), French *Clair-et-te* (84) and *Char-les* (105), German *Re-ichspost* (22) and *Erzä-hlung* (116), and Polish *Sienkiewi-cz* (215). The preparation of the final version of the work will be an opportunity to carefully reexamine this material before it goes into print and to correct such shortcomings.

Every contribution to the body of biographical and bibliographical reference works is welcome, especially in under-researched areas such as Slovene translation. The final version of *SPL* will represent a valuable resource for biographers, historians, translators, and others dealing not only with the great names that have ridden through Slovene history, but the "horses" that sometimes carried them as well.

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⁶ See the entry at http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo_Cerkvenik.