

ANTOINE CHALVIN – JEAN-LÉON MULLER – KATRE TALVISTE – MARIE VRINAT-NIKOLOV (eds): Histoire de la traduction littéraire en Europe médiane. Des origines à 1989 [The History of Literary Translation in Central Europe. From Its Origins to 1989]

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To create a publication such as *The History of Literary Translation in Central Europe. From Its Origins to 1989*, which means almost to the end of the 20th century, must have been not only difficult, but also full of unexpected issues. The authors' goal was to shed light on the translation production of sixteen Central European nations over ten or eleven centuries. It becomes clear that the authors had to face many internal and external contradictions and obscurities. What actually is Central Europe? This is one of the first questions that arises. More follow: what can be called a literary translation across centuries, countries and national literatures, when it comes to such an ethnically and culturally intermingled zone as Central Europe? However, that is not all. There is also the question of the individual translator and his/her status, the question of translation spreading in a cultural and geographic space, the question of selecting a piece of writing for translation and the style of translation in various literary traditions, under various historical and political conditions, language frameworks and many others... If a team of authors had decided to undertake such a task, they needed to have a clear idea of this cultural area's character and especially of basic translation process determiners. Another factor should be taken into consideration, and that is the multilateral nature of any collective work, defined by the research area's difficulty, number of authors and different points of view. It must be said, however, that this history of Central European literary translation history does credit to its authors and to the whole concept. It is a well-structured achievement.

Twenty-six people authored this publication, four among them also doing editorial work. This means collecting the individual submissions, reducing their length or expanding on them where necessary. This was because the submissions were, compared to their published versions, originally substantially longer. These conditions considered, the publication's final form is astoundingly extensive and stands head and shoulders above other works in its field. The authors were able to keep a compact structure but fill it with vast amounts of varied content and details, thus allowing the publication to explore the specifics of each literature presented.

Attention should first be drawn to the expression *Europe médiane*, meaning central or middle Europe. It is something that the English language so awkwardly calls "Central", "East-Central" or "Central and South-eastern" Europe. It is not quite clear whether an expression like *médiane* can be found in other languages. In any case, the term *médiane* may be the best way to describe the geographic (historical, cultural and religious included) characteristics of the literatures located in the middle of Europe all the way from the north to the south. The countries in question are: Poland, the Baltic states of Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, then further to the south, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, and Northern Macedonia. The term *médiane*, in the middle, suggests, that Europe is divided into three parts, which more or less fits our modern-day view of the continent. Indeed,

Europe is neither homogenous, nor bipolar. It can be concluded, as even this publication confirms, that so-called *middle* Europe boasts a specific character. It is based neither upon a picturesque specificity, nor backwardness, but upon the state of being geographically determined between two lateral and often conflicting entities. Its situation shaped its historical consciousness and its ability to view the contemporary changes in the world order more acutely and more precisely than Western or Eastern Europe, since they were kept imprisoned by various chimeras of hegemony.

The publication's structure is relatively complex, since it addresses translation from various perspectives. There is the historical point of view, which records the formation of various literatures and cultures from ecclesiastical literature and scholarly writings to modern and contemporary literature. Besides that, the publication also describes the formation of languages from the universal to the vernacular and translation on all language levels. Further on comes the description of various translation forms and functions in multiple historical eras of target literatures. The individual translator's status, their social background and methods are analyzed, as well as the formation of grammar and vocabulary and the literary language standardization through the influence of translation. The publication is divided into four main parts, all of them discussing translation under different historical conditions, which forms the basis for the various significance of translation in the history of these literatures.

The first part, "The Translation of Religious Texts" begins around the 9th century, describing the Christianization process and the various conditions it had to face in Central Europe. It also offers enriching and interesting analyses of Bible translations or various medieval discussions concerning the shape and function of translation in an almost illiterate environment. The second part, "The Translation and Formation of Secular Literature", describes the spread of culture in medieval and early modern societies.

This section records the spread of various written sources and their change from mere records into early literary forms. It also looks at the birth and formation of national languages in the context of historical and political events during the rise and fall of states from the 17th through the 19th century. This part's second chapter exclusively discusses topics of translation, like the spread of education, the relationship between the translation process and the changes it brought to the various national languages, or the beginnings of secular literature and its differentiation under the pressure of translation. The third part, "Translation and Literary Modernity", focuses first and foremost on the period between the 19th and 20th centuries, the advent of modernization, modernism and the avantgarde. The territorial division of Central Europe had to undergo a radical change because of the First World War and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. From the ashes, new states started to emerge that had a different view on mixed multinational entities, as well as the position of national literatures. This substantially strengthened the status and the function of translation. The questions that translators and literary critics commonly asked started to touch upon literary techniques (free verse, imagery, walking poems), the selection of to-be-translated works (modernity, traditions) or authorship (collective translations, direct and second-hand translation) and so on. These three parts cover the history of translation from early ecclesiastical texts and annals, up to the first half of the 20th century.

The fourth and final part of translation history touches upon post-war translation period and bears the name "Translation under Totalitarianism". This section is much more extensive and specific than the preceding ones. It provides a platform for Central European authors to document the formation of literary translations from the 1950s through the 1980s, all under the pressure of totalitarian regimes, communist ideology and a careful disinterest in the west.

The introduction to this part clearly shows the basis of these states' political structures and the development of their regimes that clashed with culture through censorship, political supervision, centralisation and pressure. Often the state enforced the methods of socialist realism in the literary creative process, and as a reaction, many original works had to be published in secret. Translations and journals were also spread under cover and published abroad. People organized theatre plays and university lectures in their homes, many were forced to emigrate, and the list goes on. The authors offer deep analyses despite the lack of space. For example, merely the name of one of the chapters, "The Geography of Translation", offers an interesting incentive. The headings of its individual subchapters present the literary development of the so-called socialist states after 1945. Special attention is paid to the short period of two or three years just after the war, when the Polish, Romanian and Czechoslovak literatures returned to their interwar roots and once again started to translate from English and French. The next part discusses the so-called directed or ordered geography in translation and the subsequent dominance of Russian literature. This is followed by a part called "The Return of Western Literatures", chiefly at the end of the 1980s, and besides that a return towards the so-called socialist literatures. The following two short chapters lead us to the boom of Latin American literatures and minority literatures. The final chapter of this socialist translation section analyzes the translated genres, the phenomenon of branding the translators as appropriate or inappropriate, the publishers' ingenious strategies when it came to publishing classic world literature, the changes it had to undergo during the publishing process, the existence of covert translators (i.e. those unable to publish officially and using other names), etc. The descriptions of the translators' social status, their abilities, education and especially compensation, since many of the best suffered the greatest shortage of work, are all a part of this chapter.

The History of Literary Translation in Central Europe. From Its Origins to 1989 reflects translation as well as national literatures. Based on this, one may venture to decipher the publication's viewpoint on world literature, the model of world literature developed in Central Europe. This model is different from the one known to the western literatures, since it arose in a different time, different environment and under different conditions. On the other hand, the vast number of literary and cultural similarities between the Central European countries can be surprising. It is no wonder, after all the political development of Central European countries varied little and they shared a common strip of territory. The maps at the end of the publication document this fact very well, by pointing out the countries' layout in the middle of Europe. Their situations change, but the countries keep relating to each other, and the authors of this collective work masterfully shed light on all these aspects. Slovak literary studies under the conduct of Dionýz Ďurišin's interliterary theory explored a similar area to the one presented in *The History of Literary Translation in Central Europe*, pointing out the processes which have been meticulously analyzed by this French publication. Compared to other works of comparative literature, this book is much more complex and detailed. One might argue, however, that this is not a piece of comparative literature at all. How is it to be defined then? After all, this publication presents foreign literature translation data of three or four languages during the same time period, all in a single paragraph, or it points out the various translation modalities in geographically close Central European literatures during a given time period, again, in just one chapter. But even if the book's aim were not to compare, it is still an extremely useful work in the fields of foreign literature studies, translation studies, receptive studies and world literature studies.

The book concludes with a register of writers mentioned in the title, which can help to reconstruct the publication's composition,

as despite the authors' best attempts at balance, there are some literatures mentioned less often than others. Although the second part of the book offers exclusive space for each literature, the reader may feel that some literatures (Romanian for example) vanish from certain time periods, while others (Hungarian or Polish) are mentioned much more often. The responsibility for this may lie with the authors themselves, especially their beliefs of what needs to be pointed out and what can remain in the background. Slovak literature is also represented considerably at the beginning, in the part on religious lit-

erature and writings. This is chiefly thanks to one of the authors, Katarína Bednárová, whose work can also be found throughout the book. All things considered, Slovak and Czech literature appear rather often in various parts of the text, particularly in the analyses of the normalization period from the fourth part to the conclusion (235–361), which makes it of particular interest to international literary criticism.

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IVANA KUPKOVÁ – ZBYNĚK FIŠER et al.: Jiří Levý: zakladatel československé translologie [Jiří Levý: The Founder of Czechoslovak Translation Studies]
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At the time of creation and formation of Czech and Slovak translation theory as well as its praxis and criticism in the 1960s and 1970s, there were two outstanding personalities, whose scholarly work overcame the borders of the Czechoslovak cultural and academic context: Jiří Levý (1929–1967) and Anton Popovič (1933–1984). Not surprisingly, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Jiří Levý's death, Czech and Slovak scholars decided not only to remember the most important aspects of his scholarly heritage, but also to prove its importance in contemporary translation theory and praxis in a collective monograph called *Jiří Levý: The Founder of Czechoslovak Translation Studies*.

The monograph comprises not only a preface, bibliography, index of names and terms and summary in three languages, but also nine articles of an evaluative or analytical character covering a large spectrum of Levý's scholarly heritage in the area of literary theory and translation studies. Considering the huge thematical scope and well-founded articles we can firstly state that this collective monograph is a significant enrichment of contemporary translation studies.

At the very beginning of this collection is the chapter "Science, Philosophy, Literature. Jiří Levý Died Fifty Years Ago" by the literary aesthetician Milan Suchomel, an emeritus professor at Masaryk University in Brno, a colleague and a friend of J. Levý. As the title may suggest, the author pays attention mainly to Levý's thinking on possibilities of using a methodological framework of exact sciences and philosophy in literary research. He focuses his attention not only on Levý's effort to relieve "literature from the domination of subjective impressions and from a pressure of ideological speculations" (12), but also to the possible limitations of applying such a methodological base in practice, because – as already stated by Levý himself – "[t]heory of facts has not been able to define reliable measuring tools for an aesthetic value yet. It is applicable just as an auxiliary method for exact analyses of an internal structure of a piece of literature [...], but it still cannot be applied as a methodological base for general theory of literature" (12). Although the author of this chapter observes Levý's ideas in his literary research from Heidegger's hermeneutics to Ricoeur's project of interpretative reading of literature, he rightfully con-