



Promoting Macedonian Literary Heritage in German-Speaking Countries

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Abstract

This scientific paper tries to give a detailed overview of the routes to success our writers have followed to reach international reading community, focusing on Germany and Austria where German is official. An account is provided of Macedonian titles of novels, short stories, folk tales, plays etc., which have been translated into German fully or in fragments, citing their authors and translators. The number of Macedonian literary works translated into German has increased over the years, which only goes to prove the growing interest of the German-speaking audience to read Macedonian literature.

Key words: promoting; translation; literary heritage.

1. Introduction

“It has not been easy for Macedonian writers to cut their way through to reach European reading audience, which knows little about our literature. A high quality translation and the effort of national cultural policy are of crucial importance.

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The impending doom of small languages, small countries and small literatures seems to be their unassertiveness, or as a Croatian literary critic used to say, “their lack of Americanized plots and designed

tragedies, and speaking a language we feel close to...”[1] So let’s see in which way and to what extent Macedonian writers have been made popular in German-speaking regions. This article tries to demonstrate the well-trodden paths some of our writers have cut through, which could be an example of how to further promote Macedonian literature, primarily in Germany and Austria. It is a form of titles collection of Macedonian novels, folk tales, plays etc., translated into German in whole or in fragments citing their authors and translators as well. The fact that some of the novels have only been translated in fragments shows that there is a strong probability that they will be fully translated into German in future. It can be seen on the modest list that their number increases with the years, which is an indicator for an ever-growing German-speaking readers’ interest to read our literature works.

2. Macedonian works of literature translated into German

We will start with presenting some novels translated into German. These include: the famous novel about the destiny of Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia during the Greek Civil War *Crno seme* by Tashko Georgievski, (translated by: Hans-Joachim Grimm); a contemporary novel about the challenges facing women in 21st century *Od agendata na Kalina Kalin* by Liljana Pandeva (translated by: Wolf Oschlies), *Mojata rodnina Emilija* by Vlada Uroshevijk (translated by: Benjamin Langer), *Sestrata na Sigmund Frojd* by Goce Smilevski (translated by: Benjamin Langer), *Osmoto svetsko chudo* by Jordan Plevnesh (translated by: Will Firth); the novels *Vremeto na kozite* (translated by: Roberto Mantovani) and *Erveche – kniga za edna majka* (translated by: Will Firth), both by Luan Starova [2] etc. Many fragments of famous novels of Macedonian authors have also been published, such as: *Plivanje vo prashina* by Igor Isakovski (translated by: Will Firth) [3], *Skriena kamera* by Lidija Dimkovska (translated by: Will Firth) [4], *Papokot na svetot* by Venko Andonovski (translated by: Peter Rau)[5]. Several dozen short stories by renowned Macedonian writers of the 20th century have been translated into German and published in the 1976 collection originally titled *Moderne Erzähler der Welt. Makedonien* (MK. *Sovremenite raskazhuvachi na svetot. Makedonija*) (translated by: Matthias Bronisch). This collection includes: *Chovekot na pokrivot* by Jovan Boshkovski, *Lozje* by Blazhe Koneski, *Mrtovec bez stopan* by Mile Nedelkovski, *Prva vecher* by Venko Maleski, *Dojde vo kvecherinata* by Tome Momirovski, *Kruzno patuvanje na senkata* and *Jaglika vo parkot*, both by Dimitar Solev, *Konzulska nokj* by Kole Chashule and many others. Other collections of short stories published in German are the collection of modern short stories from Macedonia *Kukjata na krajot od seloto*, where the name of Blagoja Risteski Platnar appears as its author and publisher (translated by: Roberto Mantovani and Joachim Rem), as well as the short stories collection *Golemiot kufer* by Ivan Dodovski (translated by: Will Firth).

On the websites of www.slovokult.de, www.transcript-review.org, www.so-uebersetzen.net, a greater number of Macedonian short stories translations are published. Some of these are: *Koga vo Skopje gi bea izmislile chadorite* by Ermis Lafazanski (translated by: Tiina Fahrni), *Stella Maris* by Zoran Zafirovski (translated by: Will Firth), *Ludo leto* by Dimitar Solev (translated by: Benjamin Langer), *Sabja* by Vlada Uroshevijk (translated by: Benjamin Langer), several short prose works from the collection of *Sedmata strana na kockata. 121 kratki prozi* by Vlada Uroshevijk (translated by: Benjamin Langer), *Razgovor so Spinoza* by Goce Smilevski (translated by: Will Firth), *Smrtta na liscata*, excerpt from the short story collection *Pesochen chasovnik* by Igor Isakovski (translated by: Benjamin Langer), *Detskoto igralishte* by Rumena Buzharovska (translated by:

Will Firth) etc. The translation of the short story of *Nora*, also by Rumena Buzharovska (translated by: Will Firth) is published in the Austrian magazine of “*Ostragehege*” [6] No. 47/ III/2007. Martin S. George has made the selection and translation into German of 36 tales of Macedonian folklore (collectors of folklore: Cepenkov, Shapkarev etc.) in the collection originally titled *Makedonische Märchen und Fabeln* (MK. Makedonski skazni i basni) writing its afterword. Some of the tales include: *Volkot; Dvete vrapchinja i mrzliviot chovek; Knezot shto se nauchil koshnici da plete; Lisicata, ezhot i krtot; Moma Tentelina i volcite; Ovcharot i trite samovili; Samo meso doma doshlo; Trite samovili, stariot slepec i kjeleshot* etc. Wolfgang Eschker has also published several anthologies of Macedonian tales, novels, anecdotes, legends etc., selecting and translating them himself. One of them is the collection: *Makedonski narodni prikazni* (1972). An excerpt of the play *Verter i Verter* by Zhanina Mircheska (translated by: Elizabeta Lindner in Cooperation with Petra Huber) is available in German on www.slovokult.de. Wolf Oschlies translated Misirkov’s *Za makedonskite raboti* in 2012, which is a foundation work for Macedonian literature, culture, national identity, and wrote the foreword to the this issue.

3. Further promoting Macedonian literary heritage

The increasing presence of Macedonian literature in Germany and Austria indicates reflects the credit to the translators. They discovered the quality of Macedonian literature and unselfishly set themselves the goal to ensure that all lovers of the written word in the German-speaking countries enjoy reading Macedonian literary works. We saw that the translators of modern times, who eagerly continue to work on promotion of Macedonian literature in these European areas are: Benjamin Langer, Wolf Oshlies, Will Firth etc. As well as a large number of novels, quite a few segments of novels and short stories are also published in some magazines. We point out No. 154. of the Vienna magazine „*Wespennest zeitschrift für brauchbare texte und bilder*“, entirely dedicated to Macedonia, publishing several works of Macedonian writers and poets as well as other Macedonian topics. While No. 35. of “*Transcript*” magazine dealt with modern lyricism and prose from Macedonia. Websites such as: slovokult.de, www.transcript-review.org, www.so-uebersetzen.net are there to promote Macedonian literature through publishing works translated into German. The association *So-Übersetzen*, aims to promote and enhance literary translation primarily from Slavic languages in Southeast Europe (<http://www.so-uebersetzen.net>). The European network of *Traduki* [7] even funds works of our authors, used by publishing companies to promote themselves on book fairs across the globe.

According to the data we have at the moment, Wolf Oschlies is currently working on the novel *Tri veka* by Savo Kostadinovski. This projects is part of the “Call to fund translations into other languages of famous and high quality works of Macedonian literature“. Funding translations of high quality Macedonian works of literature is directly supported by the Macedonian ministry of culture in order to promote Macedonian literature and culture.

4. Conclusion

This paper is a result of an interesting research based on field work of the authors including visiting larger libraries and similar institutions, insight into library funds at home and abroad, primarily in Germany and Austria, direct contacts with writers in Macedonian, and Macedonian into German translators, extensive search on the Internet etc. A conclusion may be drawn that Macedonian works have been translated belonging to all

literary genres represented in the Macedonian literature as this process intensified over time, probably due to the great interest of the reading audience in those countries. This paper may be considered as a form of a handbook believed to include all or most titles of literary works translated in whole or in fragments from Macedonian into German. And, since translation work expansion has been taking place recently, we are fully aware that over time this paper will need to be extended and updated.

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- [2] These are two novels of the famous „the Balkans saga“, published in German, and scored high with the German critics.
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