

## Slovak Poetry in English Anthologies

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### Abstract

The paper gives a survey of English translations of Slovak poetry published in anthologies, from the seminal John Bowring's anthology in 1832 up to the latest selection from six Slovak poets published in Great Britain in 2010. It attempts to chronologically introduce and briefly analyse each of thirty anthologies in which Slovak poetry appeared up to the present time. We also included those that were primarily focused on Czech poetry but published poets of Slovak origin writing in Czech like Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik. As it can be seen from many analysed books, Slovak poetry is not as unknown in the English speaking world as it seems at first sight. However, this penetration has met with difficulties from the unsystematic approach of editors through limited reach of some anthologies published within compatriot communities to varied skills of particular translators.

Of all arts, literature is the one that meets with the biggest difficulties in crossing geographical borders. Dependent on language, and thus on translation, it has to overcome more obstacles in making its way abroad than visual arts or music. It gets even harder when it represents what is called a small culture since it usually faces a lack of skilled translators proficient in the given language. This is also the case of Slovak poetry and its penetration into the English speaking world. This paper aims to map the history of English translations of Slovak poetry published in anthologies. It attempts to collect all accessible pertinent volumes and evaluate their merit in spreading the knowledge of Slovak poetry abroad. It is necessary to highlight a pioneering effort in this field of Ľudmila Pánisová who was first to have embarked on this adventurous journey in 2014 with her monograph about English translations of Slovak literature.

Quantitatively, up to now, the poetry of Slovak authors in English appeared in thirty anthologies and selections. Regarding historical and other contexts, it is not a small number, however, it has to be said that part of it goes to authors born in Slovakia but writing in Czech like Ján Kollár or Pavol Jozef Šafárik. Both poets were of Slovak origin but used Czech as their working language, partly due to their Protestant denomination and its traditional orientation on the Czech language. In addition, Kollár did not accept Ľudovít Štúr's codification of the Slovak language in 1843 and Šafárik spent the most part of his life (from the age of 24 to his death) abroad – in Novi Sad (Vojvodina) and Prague.

From the methodological point of view, it is necessary to say that the scope of the paper and the number of anthologies involved did not allow us to make a thorough analysis of translations, however, we deal with them on a more detailed basis either in papers written on more specified topics (Andričík 2021), or in our complex monograph about English book translations of Slovak poetry that is currently being prepared for edition.

To collect as many anthologies for the research as possible, we used previously published bibliographies of Czech and Slovak literature in English (Kovtun 1988, or Šeflová, 2008). Very useful for us was also a monograph by Ľudmila Pánisová *Slovenská literatúra v anglickom preklade – história a súčasnosť (1832 – 2013)* published in 2014. Since there is no single complete database of English translations of Slovak poetry, we also resorted to accessible web sources and catalogues of libraries.

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The history of English translations of Slovak poetry published in anthologies goes back to 1832 when *Cheskian Anthology: Being a History of the Poetical Literature of Bohemia* came out in London. Its editor and translator, **Sir John Bowring** (1792-1872), was a well-known English hyperpolyglot (he claimed to speak one hundred languages actively, which was questioned by many later), politician, member of parliament, and businessman. He also published anthologies of Russian, Polish, Serbian, and Hungarian poetry and translation of folk songs of most of European nations.

Unlike most anthologies of Slovak poetry usually edited and translated by people with Slovak or Czech roots, descendants of emigrants mainly to the USA (Wratislaw, Kotouč, Chudoba, Kramoris, Cincura among them), this one was compiled by a native Englishman, which liberates him from possible interference of the source language. On the other hand, there is a threat in such cases that some fine shades of meaning remain hidden.

In addition to Bowring's opening study *Poetical Literature of Bohemia*, short profiles and translations of Czech poets like František Čelakovský, Antonín Puchmajer, or Josef Jungmann, the anthology includes two Slovak poets. The first one is "John Kollár", introduced as „Bohemian minister at Pest, in Hungary" (Bowring 1832, 195), with 41 translated sonnets from his famous book of verse *The Daughter of Sláva* (Slávy dcera, 1832). The second is "Paul Joseph Šafařík", introduced as „professor at the gymnasium of Neusatz, in Slavonia" (Bowring 1832, 257). An interesting fact is that Bowring did not select any poem from his only book of verse *The Muse of Tatra with a Slavonic Lyre* (Tatranská múza s lyrou slovanskou, 1814) but resorted to his less-known poems published in magazines – Oldřich and Božena (Oldřich a Božena) and Jarmila to Stawislaw (Jarmila na Slavislava).

As James Partridge states in the *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, Bowring "actually worked from German versions of the texts and his translations are rather free, though occasionally lively; they met, however, with virtually no public success" (Partridge 2000, 330). Despite this fact Bowring deserves credit for having been the first one to bring English-speaking readers information about Slovak poetry and considering the state of translation of that time, he did it at a fairly good level.

Seventeen years after Bowring, there came another anthology edited by **Albert Henry Wratislaw** (1822-1892), English Slavist of Czech origin, priest and tutor at Christ's College in Cambridge. It was called *Lyra Czecho-slowanská* (Czech-Slavonic Lyre) with a subtitle *Bohemian Poems, Ancient and Modern* and was again published in London. Slovak poetry is represented only by a short poem by Ján Kollár *Change of Taste* (*Proměna chuti*), perhaps intended to be a complement to earlier Bowring's translations from *The Daughter of Sláva* that was not included in this volume. Due to this scarce representation, Wratislaw's anthology cannot, certainly, be more than a statistical item in the history of English translations of Slovak poetry.

Throughout the history, translations of Slovak poetry appeared in books that were not typical anthologies, like *Historical View of the Languages and Literature of the Slavic Nations With a Sketch of Their Popular Poetry* (1850) written by American linguist and translator of German origin **Talvj** (full name Therese Albertine Luise von Jakob Robinson, 1797-1870). Two Slovak folk songs included in this volume – *The Mother's Curse* and *Sun and Moon* – probably come from Ján Kollár's collections of Slovak folk songs *National Songs* (*Národné zpievanky*, 1834, 1835) and *Wordly Songs of Slovak People in Hungary* (*Písňe světské lidu slovenského v Uhřích*, 1823, 1827) under the title *Mati diovča sháňa* and *Keby mi milý muoj* respectively.

At the turn of centuries, in 1899, there came out an outline of the history of Bohemian literature written by writer, historian, and politician **Count Lützow** (1849-1916). In the chapter *The Revival of Bohemian Literature*, he quotes extracts from the "foresong" to *The Daughter of Sláva* and four sonnets. However, they are included in his text without having been divided into lines and for the most part, translations are rather literal than literary. According to Lützow, Kollár's poem "perhaps contributed more than any other work to the revival of Bohemian literature". (Lützow 1899, 373) He also briefly mentions Pavol Jozef Šafárik and his book of verse *Tatra Muse with The Slavic Lyre* but gives no extracts.

As we can see, the journey of Slovak poetry into the English-speaking world was long and slow. Hardly anyone did more in this respect than Percy **Paul Selver** (1880-1970), Londoner, former diplomat, linguistic assistant to exile government, and literary magazine editor whose translations of Slovak poetry were published in four anthologies. The first one, *An Anthology of Modern Bohemian Poetry*, came out in 1912. Again, the only included poem of a Slovak author is Selver's

translation of the complete Prelude to The Daughter of Sláva. Original quantitative elegiac couplet is rendered in accentual-syllabic verse with slight archaisation of diction (like usage of shortened forms or changed word order). Perhaps this was also the reason why it sounded strange to Ezra Pound who reviewed the anthology in the magazine Poetry in 1912: "This is a good anthology of modern Bohemian poetry, accurately translated into bad and sometimes even ridiculous English." (Pound 1912, 57)

In 1919, **Selver** published *Anthology of Modern Slavonic Literature in Prose and Verse*. Unlike the previous anthology, it did not include any Slovak poet, not excepting Kollár. Selver only calls him "one of the poets of Czech revival" and quotes four lines from the Prelude to The Daughter of Sláva in the Introduction.

On the other hand, Selver's incomplete translation of the Prelude from his 1912 anthology with minor changes appeared in *A Short Survey of Czech Literature*, published in 1924 by Czech translator, literary historian, and linguist **František Chudoba** (1878-1941). In comparison with the earlier version, Selver reduced short forms and applied more natural word order.

The same poem, slightly shortened and with the title changed from the Prelude to the Prologue, was published in Selver's third anthology *An Anthology of Czechoslovak Literature* (1929). Besides Ján Kollár, the book brings translations of poetry by Ján Botto, Svetozár Hurban Vajanský, Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav, Janko Jesenský, Ivan Krasko and Martin Rázus, thus substantially drawing from newer periods of Slovak literature, even though Slovak authors are modestly represented in comparison with Czech ones.

Shortly after the WW2, in 1946, Selver published his fourth anthology, this time focused solely on poetry: *A Century of Czech and Slovak Poetry*. This selection, dedicated to Czech poet and theatre theoretician Otakar Fischer, comprises sixteen poems of nine Slovak authors. Some of translations were taken over from his 1929 anthology, while Selver added some new names – that of poet and Protestant priest Martin Braxatoris-Sládkovičov, a son of more famous Slovak Romantic poet Andrej Sládkovič, and that of modernist poet Ivan Gall. A remarkable fact is that Selver published his third, even though incomplete version of Kollár's Prelude to The Daughter of Sláva that substantially differs from previous ones. The changes are far from being cosmetic: many lines were completely restructured, perhaps to gain more modern expression.

In April 1948, the magazine *The Slavonic and East European Review* published a review of Selver's anthology written by a British linguist Stuart E. Mann (1905-1986), appreciating Selver for his survey of literature: "Mr Selver had given us a remarkably comprehensive outline of Czech and Slovak literature in a sixty-page introduction." He is aware of difficulties that await an English translator, and except for praise he formulates some objections to Selver's translation that "occasionally make awkward reading" and reproaches the translator who "frequently twists

English syntax to gain a rhyme". Despite this, Mann calls the anthology "a most valuable documentary work which should find a place on every literary bookshelf". (Mann 1948, p. 620)

Let us leave the remarkable efforts of Paul Selver and go back to the period shortly after WW1. In 1919, American politician of Czech origin from Nebraska **Otto Kotouč** (1875-1973) compiled a short anthology called *Songs of the Slav (Translations from the Czecho-Slovak)*. The whole book comprising only five authors begins with two sonnets by Ján Kollár taken from the third canto of *The Daughter of Sláva* (1862 edition). Kotouč also calls Kollár the Slovak poet "known as the poet of Pan-Slavism" (Kotouč 1919, 4). Even though this anthology only made a small step in spreading knowledge about Slovak poetry in the English speaking world, it deserves to be mentioned.

**Clarence Augustus Manning** (1893-1972) was a professor of Slavic philology at Columbia University in New York and editor of a notable anthology published in 1929. *An Anthology of Czechoslovak Poetry* holds an important position in the history of English translations of Slovak poetry because for the first time it was published in a separate section of the book called Slovak Poetry. The book, with no higher aims than to be a "collection of Czechoslovak poetry as translated in the New World", mostly gathers translations previously published in magazines or other books. Thus, Manning utilised a folk song from Talvj's *Historical View of the Languages and Literature of the Slavic Nations With a Sketch of Their Popular Poetry*, or borrowed translations of Kollár's sonnets earlier published by Kotouč in his anthology. Also taken over from a magazine was an excerpt of the famous Romantic poem *The Death of Janošík* written by Ján Botto and translated by reverend George Gallik. Unfortunately, as Ivan Kramoris states in the preface of his translation of the poem (Kramoris in Botto 1944, 7), Gallik found the translation of the whole poem impossible and gave it up. On the other hand, American readers got the first opportunity to learn about other Slovak poets like Svetozár Hurban Vajanský or Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav, translated by Canadian scholar and translator Watson Kirkconnell (1895-1977). Besides Ivan Krasko, who had been introduced earlier in Selver's translation in the anthology edited by František Chudoba (here, Manning decided to use his translation), readers can learn about some other Slovak Modernist poets like Ľudmila Podjavorinská, Janko Jesenský and Ignác Grebáč-Orlov, translated by Daniel Slabey (1899-1971).

In the same year, the magazine *Slavonic and East European Review* published a short review of this anthology by American Slavist and translator George Rapall Noyes (1873-1952) who wrote: „Many of the translations were made by persons of Czechoslovak birth or ancestry, so that the book bears witness to the real interest of the Czechoslovak population in the United States in the literature of the land whence they came... The translations vary in merit: some, to speak frankly, are so clumsy that they not deserve publication; others are excellent" (Noyes

1929, 461). Noyes especially appreciates the translations made by Walter Kirkconnell.

Not long after Manning's anthology, in 1931, there came another selection of Slavic poetry in Portland. The book, edited and translated by American poet and novelist **Edna Worthley Underwood** (1873-1961), bore the title *The Slav Anthology* and collected previously published poems of Slavic authors. Although the biggest attention is, understandably, paid to Russian poetry, the anthology brings 64 lines from the Prelude to Kollár's *The Daughter of Sláva* and two of his sonnets within the chapter introducing Czech poetry. His epic, Underwood writes, "was effective, not only upon Bohemian peoples, but upon writers throughout Russia, Poland" (Underwood 1931, unpagged). Despite some shifts in meaning as a consequence of a looser approach, her translations are fluent and readable.

The editor and translator of the anthology of Czech poetry *The Soul of a Century*, thin but rich in content, was **Roderick Aldrich Ginsburg** (1899-1987), Czech-born emigrant to the USA who worked as a broadcaster in Chicago for some time and also published a monograph about Ján Kollár under the title *Ján Kollár: A Poet of Pan Slavism* in 1942. Kollár's participation in this anthology makes seven sonnets and 40 lines from the Prelude to *The Daughter of Sláva*. The comparison with earlier Bowring's and Underwood's translations of the Prelude shows Ginsburg is close to Bowring in using a hybrid type of sonnet with some Italian (quadruple rhymes) and some English elements (heroic couplet) but he also used a pure Italian type of sonnet in the manner of Underwood. In the Prelude, he makes no effort to use accentual-syllabic substitution for elegiac distich and his line rather leans on a standard number of accents.

In a short review published in the magazine *Books Abroad* in 1944, Carl Weiskopf evaluated the anthology. He considers Ginsburg's translations "accurately and diligently done", appreciating "[s]hort biographical sketches" but missing "a general introduction giving the English reader some idea of the growth of Czech literature" (Weiskopf 1944, 293).

The reviewer of Ginsburg's anthology himself shortly became the editor of the next one called *Hundred Towers (A Czechoslovak Anthology of Creative Writing)* in 1945. **Carl Weiskopf** (1900-1955), who was born in Prague, emigrated to the USA from Nacism and worked at the Czechoslovak embassy after WW2, dedicated his anthology to "Czech and Slovak writers, shot as hostages or thrown into concentration camps by the savage Nazi invaders of their country" (Weiskopf 1945, unpagged). His ambition was not to give "a full outline of Czech and Slovak literary trends up to the period covered by the selections..., rather to mark the starting points for certain currents of thought, and so indicate the primary components of certain creative methods which become manifest in the contents of this anthology" (Weiskopf 1945, xv).

The first of Slovak poets introduced in the book was Laco Novomeský with two poems translated by Walter Morrison and Joy

Davidman. Especially the poem *The Sky of Spain* (Španielska obloha) with a strong anti-fascist and anti-war tone, written after the author visited the Czechoslovak units fighting in Spain, reflects his apprehension at the brink of WW2.

The remaining translations of poems by Ivan Krasko and Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav were taken over from two anthologies published in 1929 and compiled by Paul Selver and Clarence Augustus Manning.

**Ivan Joseph Kramoris** (1912-1982), born in Milwaukee, journalist, editor of Slovak magazines, and translator, compiled and published a thin but very important *Anthology of Slovak Poetry. A Selection of Lyric and Narrative poems and Folk Ballads in Slovak and English* in 1947. Comprising almost 60 poems, half of them being folk ballads, it was the first separate anthology of solely Slovak poetry in English. Artificial poetry begins with Renaissance poet Ján Silván and ends with the author of the preface Miloš K. Mlynarovič. Even though it was not thoroughly representative, with sixteen poets (except for folk songs) it could be considered as a decent probe into Slovak poetry. Slightly surprising is the fact that Kramoris did not include a single poem by Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav nor his own earlier translation of *The Death of Jánošík* by Slovak Romantic poet Ján Botto published separately in 1944. He explains his approach in bibliographical notes pointing out that "[it] is impossible, in view of the pressing need of such work, for one man to translate representative poems from all the major Slovak poets" (Kramoris 1947, 138), therefore he turns readers' attention to other anthologies and translations made by Selver, Ginsburg, Bowring, Weiskopf or Davidman. It should be added that Kramoris published two more books dealing with Slovak Literature: *Chronological Outline of Slovak Literature and History from the VI Century to 1939* in 1946 and *Slovakia and Slovak Literature* in 1950.

Although the *Anthology of Czech Literature*, edited and published in 1953 by **William Edward Harkins** (1921-2014), professor at Columbia University and expert in Russian and Czech literature, does not primarily belong to our survey since it rather falls into the genre of textbook and all texts are published in the original, it deserves our attention by the fact that Harkins mentions Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik as Slovak authors and it includes the *Prelude to The Daughter in Sláva* with detailed notes illuminating language particularities together with cultural and historical circumstances. In contrast to previous anthologies that published poems by Kollár or Šafárik more or less or exclusively in the Czech context, Harkins points out their place in the history of Slovak literature: "The editor has adhered to the view that all writing in Czech which has entered into the Czech cultural tradition is a part of Czech literature. On the other hand, he does not wish to deny such writers of Slovak origin as Kollár or Šafařík, who wrote in Czech before the development of the Slovak literary language, the place which they properly deserve in the development of Slovak literature and the Slovak cultural tradition". (Harkins 1953, viii) Besides, in the chapter about

Romanticism Harkins highlights Šafárik for his achievements in scholarship and Kollár for his Prelude: "The artificiality of this type of poetry in Czech, combined with Kollár's extremely artificial sentence order and the beauty of pathetic exclamation, helps to give the work grandeur and makes it perhaps the most magnificent poetry in all of Czech literature". (Harkins 1953, 14)

The next book is interesting rather by absence than presence. In 1958, **Robert Conquest** (1917-2015), British-American historian and poet (member of the literary circle „The Movement“ with Philip Larkin and Kingsley Amis), specialist in Soviet Union, published an anthology *Back to Life: Poems from behind the Iron Curtain*. A good intention to introduce current poetry from the East bloc to Western readers was partly thwarted by a not-quite-representative selection of authors. Apart from the fact that none Slovak poet was included, the names of translated Czech poets (Filip, Hořec, Pick, and Macourek) do not seem to represent the best of Czech poetry either. The book gives an impression of being more political than a literary issue. After all, the editor confirms it indirectly in the Introduction: "The collection consists of literal or fairly literal translations. It is not presented as literature, and much of its quality inevitably fails to come through... But if these translations were much less effective as literature, they would still be extraordinarily valuable as documents." (Conquest 1958, 22)

In the same year, some Slovak poetry in English translation also came out in the Southern hemisphere: **Alfred French** (1916-1997), teaching at the Department of Classical and Comparative Philology at the university in Adelaide, published *A Book of Czech Verse*. The span of the anthology is from Kollár to Holan and Kollár's poetry is represented by a short, sixteen-line excerpt from the Prelude to The Daughter of Sláva and one sonnet. Unlike all previous translators of the Prelude, French does not attempt to substitute accentual-syllabic or accentual verse for quantitative one but selects a typical verse of English poetry – blank verse. On the whole, his translation seems flatter in expression, losing its typical elegiac character. French applies a similar approach to the sonnet, reducing its line by one feet to four, and thus breaking the tradition of a five-feet iambic verse in sonnet in English literature from Shakespeare through Milton and Keats to Browning.

In comparison with all above-mentioned selections that were published abroad, a bulky, more than 400-page anthology *The Linden Tree: An Anthology of Czech and Slovak Literature 1890 – 1960* came out in Czechoslovakia in 1962 under the supervision of Czech literary scholars **Mojmír Otruba** (1923-2003) and **Zdeněk Pešat** (1927-2010). Seven included Slovak poets – Janko Jesenský, Ivan Krasko, Ján Smrek, Fraňo Král', Ján Kostra, Andrej Plávka, Pavol Horov and Štefan Žáry – were translated by English novelist and respected translator from Czech literature Edith Mary Pargeter. This inclusion of new, previously unknown names from Slovak literature is praiseworthy, however, the fact that the editors discarded poets like Válek or Rúfus is surprising despite the fact



they were newcomers to literature in that time. However, their first books of verse proved fundamental in the later development of the Slovak poetry. On the other hand, strong ideological conformity of the anthology can be seen in the overview of literature where the book of verse of a prominent Communist poet Milan Lajčiak *My Comrade Country* (1949) is given as an example of the avowal "to express the atmosphere in which the new man was being formed" (Otruba and Pešat 1962, 351).

While Miroslav Válek was undeservedly omitted from the anthology edited by Otruba and Pešat, he is a sole representative of Slovak poetry in a book that appeared in 1969 in the well-known Penguin Books edition. The editor of *New Writing in Czechoslovakia* was **George Theiner** (1926–1988), a translator who twice fled from Czechoslovakia to Great Britain (in 1937 and 1968). His aim was "to choose samples that would illustrate contemporary trends in Czech and Slovak writing" (Theiner 1969, 14). Although Theiner mentions "several fine poets in Slovakia, beginning with Laco Novomeský, who played an important part in Czechoslovak cultural life already before the war, through a man like Miroslav Válek, down to the youngest, such as Ján Stacho" (Theiner 1969, 20), the only poem of a Slovak author, *From the Absolute Diary* by Válek, besides in a shortened version, can hardly present contemporary trends in Slovak writing.

In 1973, expatriate and professor at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor **Ladislav Matejka** (1919-2012) edited a bilingual anthology *Czech Poetry – A Bilingual Anthology, Vol. I* that came out in Michigan Slavic Publications and Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures with an introduction by René Wellek. Slovak poetry is again limited to Ján Kollár and excerpts from the *Prelude to The Daughter of Sláva* translated by Alfred French and one sonnet. While the *Prelude* is an extended version of French's earlier translation published in 1958, the sonnet *To Savage Avars* (with translation based on Sir John Bowring, as is stated in the contents) is a rare example of meta-translation when a translator (perhaps French himself) revised an earlier translation made by someone else (here, Sir John Bowring). In a short introduction to Kollár, Matejka gives characteristics of *The Daughter of Sláva*: "The whole work owes much in structure to Byron's *Childe Harold*, but its literary inspiration goes back to Petrarch and Dante, and beyond them to Virgil, and Greek mythology. The strength of the book lies in its Introduction, and some of its charming love sonnets: but on the whole, it has a curiously archaic, not to say pedantic atmosphere, and some of the poems are so hard to understand that Kollár himself later published a work of notes and explanations to help the reader". (Matejka 1973, 169)

Among editors of anthologies with Czech or Slovak roots belongs **Andrew Cincura** (1917-2000), an American scholar from the University of California in Riverside, friend and translator of Jozef Cíger Hronský. His voluminous book *An Anthology of Slovak Literature*, published in 1976, was innovative in several aspects. With a foreword of American philosopher of Slovak origin Michael Novak and a short survey of Slovak

literature written by poet and translator Karol Strmeň, this anthology is a most comprehensive selection from Slovak poetry, fiction, and drama published up to that time. A comparatively ample scope was given to representatives of emigrant literature like Andrej Žarnov, Rudolf Dilong, Ján Okál, Miloš. K. Mlynarovič, Mikuláš Šprinc, Karol Strmeň, or Ján Doránsky. The majority of poems were translated by American hymnist with Slovak roots and Protestant pastor Jaroslav Vajda. Another translator was M. Martina Tybor from Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Danville, Pennsylvania. The anthology goes back to the period of Classicism with two poems by Ján Hollý, mapping the history of Slovak poetry through Romanticism (Andrej Sládkovič), realism (Svetozár Hurban Vajanský, Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav), Modernism (Ivan Krasko, Vladimír Roy), interwar period (Ján Smrek, Emil Boleslav Lukáč) to above-mentioned emigrant poets related to what was called "Catholic modernism". Even though Strmeň mentions other poets like Vojtech Mihálik or calls Milan Rúfus a powerful voice that acted "as a conscience of Slovakia", calling him "a consoler of the world who speaks for the strength and dignity of Man" (Strmeň 1976, liii), the anthology fails to give a real picture of what was going in Slovak poetry after WW2, having concentrated mainly on exile authors of this period.

Several Slovak poets got into the book *White Stones and Fir Trees (An Anthology of Contemporary Slavic Literature)*, published in 1977 and edited by **Vasa D. Mihailovich** (1926-2015), a Serbian who left Yugoslavia in 1951 for the USA, and was professor of Slavic languages and literature at the University of North Carolina. The anthology differs from the previously mentioned ones in structure since the selected poems are arranged according to the topics rather than the nations of their authors. Thus, we can find the poem *There's Fire Lurking* written by Ján Stacho in the section *Love*, while other Slovak poets – Ján Kostra, Štefan Žáry, Laco Novomeský and Miroslav Válek – went into the section *My Native Land* named after Kostra's poem.

The chapter *Inside the World Is Happiness* about the contemporary Czechoslovak literature, written by Czech literary scholar Jaroslav Janů, characterises all the five selected Slovak poets: "The leading Slovak poet, by unanimous consent, is 63-year-old Laco Novemesky. He was already the first poet in Slovakia between the wars, a leading personality in the pre-war Communist movement, and a friend of the Czech avant-garde poets. His work from the beginning successfully combined modern and socialist committed poetry... Ján Kostra a Štefan Žáry, two of the other poets represented in the anthology, are leading members of the older group of the middle generation. Kostra has his roots in the neo-symbolism of the interwar period. He has achieved a very pure, harmonious verse celebrating his homeland, while Žáry is working towards a synthesis following several publications imbued with a playful surrealist imagination. And, finally, Miroslav Válek and Ján Stacho are two prominent representatives of the young Slovak poets who are writing concrete or objective poetry, attempting to achieve an uncompromisingly

authentic lyrical expression that bears witness to present-day reality by means of dynamic modern techniques. In Válek's case there is a more penetrating intellectual contemplation, whereas Stacho's poetry is dominated by a passionate emotionality." (Janů in Mihailovich 1977, 59-60)

Ten years after Matejka's anthology, there appeared another one in Michigan: *Contemporary East European Poetry, an Anthology*, edited by **George Edward Emery** (1933-2016), American poet and translator, born in Budapest, and professor of German at the University of Michigan. Modest examples of Slovak poetry include three poems by Miroslav Válek and five poems by Slovak emigrant Svetozár Daniel Šimko. While Válek's works can undoubtedly be ranked among the best Slovak poetry after WW2, Šimko is less known in the context of Slovak literature.

Even though the second edition of the anthology, published in 1993, extends the span of Slovak poetry by two poems (one by Milan Richter and one by Erik Groch, the latter written directly in English), still was far from being representative.

The fall of communism in 1989 and the break-up of Czechoslovakia in 1993 brought a new situation in publishing Slovak poetry abroad. Free from ideological pressure, it could also be published independently from Czech poetry. Soon, there appeared the first notable volume, an anthology *Not Waiting for Miracles: Seventeen Contemporary Slovak Poets (1993)*, edited by **Peter Milčák** (1966-) and **Braňo Hochel** (1951-2015). It came out in a small but ambitious publishing house Modrý Peter in Levoča and as its subtitle indicates, it brought contemporary Slovak poetry translated by Štefánia Allen and Viera and James Sutherland-Smith. The room for the anthology appeared in 1992 when the British publishing house Forest Books abandoned publishing an anthology of Czech and Slovak poetry that had already been under preparation. Thus, James Sutherland-Smith used the material for a new book.

The anthology focuses on the middle (Ján Štrasser, Ivan Štrpka, Ivan Laučík, Mila Haugová) and young generation of Slovak poets (Marián Milčák, Ivan Kolenič, Taťjana Lehenová, Jozef Urban). The first poem of every poet was published bilingually. An English lecturer in Czech and Slovak studies Robert Pynsent appreciated the book in the magazine *Modern Poetry in Translation*, highlighting a wide scope of poetics, styles, and philosophies.

A good opportunity to introduce Slovak literature to the world came at the turn of centuries with the annual literary festival in Vilenica in Slovenia. In 2000, the festival was dedicated to Slovak literature and on this occasion, a new anthology of Slovak literature called *One Hundred Years of Slovak Literature. An Anthology* and edited by **Stanislava Chrobáková** (1960-) was published both in English and Slovenian versions. With an introduction written by Slovak literary scholar Peter Zajac, the anthology, comprising excerpts from fiction and drama, also introduced 31 Slovak poets covering the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century, from symbolist Ivan Krasko through interwar poets like Ján Smrek, Ladislav

Novomeský or Emil Boleslav Lukáč, post-war authors – Ján Kostra, Miroslav Válek, Milan Rúfus – up to postmodernist Peter Macsovszky, translated by Pavol Lukáč, Martin Solotruk, Viera and James Sutherland-Smith and the author of this study. Unlike some above analysed anthologies, this one is hard to blame for the omission of any really important literary figure. We should not hesitate to call it the most comprehensive anthology of Slovak literature ever published. Short but detailed profiles of all selected authors help English-speaking readers to get information about their place in the history of Slovak literature.

In our survey, we should also mention a small book under the title *A The Laughing Angel, an anthology of world (and Slovak) poetry and prose*, published on the occasion of the Ján Smrek International Literary Festival in 2000 in Bratislava. Its character is very heterogeneous since it brings both poetry and fiction of Slovak and foreign authors in English, Slovak, German, French, and Czech, however, there is only one poem by a Slovak author (Milan Richter) translated into English by Ewald Osers.

The nature of the anthology called *In Search of Beauty. An Anthology of Contemporary Slovak Poetry in English*, edited by **Pavol Hudík** (1937-) and **Ján Bajánek** (1954-) that came out in 2003 in co-operation of American publisher Bolchazy-Carducci in Wauconda and Slovak VVW Publishing House in Bratislava, is different. With two added poets, the book is an English translation of a Slovak anthology of poems whose authors are members of only one of Slovak writers' organizations – the Union of Slovak Writers. Therefore its title seems to be rather misleading, giving a false impression of representativeness. Besides unquestionable names who are examples of literary quality, like Štefan Moravčík, Jozef Mihalkovič or Viliam Turčány, the book contains works of authors who hardly exceed the scope of the home literary fold. The imprint page gives the names of James Sutherland-Smith and Ján Bajánek as translators but does not specify the credits.

In 2004, a British publishing house Arc Publications, specialised in publishing poetry of various nations, prepared a bilingual anthology *A Fine Line: New Poetry from Eastern & Central Europe*. Its editor was **Fiona Sampson** (1963-) and it brought young and new poetry with a short introduction by Václav Havel. Every national literature is represented by two poets – The Slovak one by Katarína Kucbelová (8 poems translated by James and Katerina Sutherland-Smith) a Martin Solotruk (4 poems translated by himself and James Sutherland-Smith). The anthology is significant from the point of view of the presentation of Slovak poetry abroad, showing works of young Slovak poets in confrontation with their peers from other Central and East European countries.

A comprehensive anthology of European poetry from 1970s, edited by **Wayne Miller** and **Kevin Prufer** with the help from regional editors (i. e. **Michael Dumanis** for Slovak poetry), came out in 2008 in Saint Paul in Minnesota. It brings poetry from 46 countries or their parts like Sápmi, Wales od Scotland and could be a good instrument to close the gap in the knowledge of contemporary European poetry by American

readers stated by the editors in their Introduction. Almost all Slovak poems selected for this anthology had previously been published either in other anthologies, or in separate selections. Thus, two poems by Mila Haugová, *To Withstand Evil*, *Alpha Centauri*, translated by James and Viera Sutherland-Smith, come from the selection *Scent of the Unseen* (2003), the poem *A Diary* by Dana Podracká, translated by Robert Welch, was published in the selection from her poetry *Forty Four* (2005). The above mentioned anthology *Not Waiting for Miracles* (1993) comprises the poem *I Blow My Nose Inartistically* by Jozef Urban and the poem *Skin Is a Wrapping of Bones* by Ivan Kolenič while the credit for both translations goes to James Sutherland-Smith. An extract from the poem *Epigraffiti* by Róbert Gál in the translation by Madelaine Hron is taken from his book *Signs and Symptoms* that came out in 2003. The last Slovak poet included in the anthology is Martin Solotrúk with his poem *How to Endure the Sun if Not Tiptoeing*, translated by the author and Marc Woodworth.

The last book to be mentioned in our survey, titled *Six Slovak Poets*, should perhaps be called a mini-anthology. Published in 2010 by Arc Publications as a sixth volume of bilingual anthologies of poetry in the edition *New Voice from Europe & Beyond*, the book, edited by **Igor Hochel** (1953-), contains selections from the works of six contemporary Slovak poets: Ján Buzássy, Mila Haugová, Kamil Peteraj, Daniel Hevier, Petra Repka a Ivan Štrpka. The credits for all translations go to John Minahane. In her foreword, the editor of the whole series Alexandra Büchler states (not quite accurately) that the book "features the work of poets of an older generation who started publishing in 1960" (Büchler in Hochel 2010, 11), since Daniel Hevier published his first book of verse in 1974 and Mila Haugová even in 1980. Despite this fact, it is a valuable volume introducing a substantial bulk of fine and contemporary Slovak poetry to English readers.

## Conclusion

More than thirty anthologies that published English translations of Slovak poetry since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century seem to be a decent number to state that Slovak poetry is not completely unknown in the world. Its journey abroad was influenced and shaped by many agents. From translations by way of intermediary language like the first, Bowring's one in 1832 through the help from expatriates we came to regular translations made by native speakers with a good command of Slovak language in the last decades. The closer look at translations shows that not all of them are of superior quality and that they often bring an incomplete or distorted picture of Slovak poetry. Some of the shifts that occur in translations can be ascribed to objective differences between languages or literary traditions but mistakes stemming from individual failures are frequent, too. Another factor that stepped into the character of English translations of Slovak poetry throughout the history was ideology with its omission of important figures of Slovak literature in

some anthologies. It is also obvious that a better chance to reach their potential readers came with those anthologies that were published in foreign publishing houses with a good distribution networks, or at least in co-operation with them. Our further research will focus on separate poetry selections that appeared in the last decades and are successful in bringing contemporary Slovak poetry to English-speaking readers.

*This study is an outcome of the VEGA research project No. 1/0407/17 Slovak Poetry in English Translations.*

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