

Francek Mukič. *Porabsko knjižnoslovensko-madžarski slovar.* Szombathely: Zveza Slovencev na Madžarskem, 2005. VI + 445 pp. (hardcover). ISBN: 963-217-762-2.

The genre of dialect dictionaries ranges considerably: from mere word-lists meant to bridge the gap between local variation and an exalted standard language, to rich compendia containing not just lexical equivalencies, but a hoard of linguistic and anthropological knowledge to be examined perpetually—as exemplified in the Slavic-speaking world by V. I. Dal’s *opus vitae*, the *Tolkovyj slovar’ živogo velikoruskago jazyka*, first published in the 1860s. On this continuum, Francek Mukič’s *Porabsko knjižnoslovensko-madžarski slovar* (henceforth *PKMS*) lies somewhat closer to the latter than to the former, despite the author’s modest statement that the compilation is intended primarily for “*everyday practicality, readability, and comprehensibility*, in short, *usefulness*, even for the linguistically less-educated native Slovene speaker from the Rába Valley” (iii). Mukič’s reasons for the work are practical and timely, given that the Rába-Valley dialect—the subdialect of Prekmurje Slovene that remained in Hungary after the 1920 Trianon partition—teeters on the brink of language death, both owing to demo-graphic attrition as well as the everyday dominance of standard Hungarian rather than standard Slovene (henceforth *SSI*). As Mukič points out, Rába-Valley speakers are more likely to code-switch into Hungarian than *SSI* when they lack vocabulary for a given topic (iii). In the years since the (de)parting of the Iron Curtain, which effectively separated Rába-Valley Slovenes from their nearest linguistic relatives in Slovenia, Rába-Valley Slovene (henceforth *RVS*) has become more frequently elevated as a standard language in its own right, as reflected in texts published on the Internet (for example, one may read the *Porabje* newspaper at <http://www.porabje.hu> or take lessons on everyday *RVS* at <http://www.vendvidek.com>). In line with promoting *RVS* as a written medium, by way of introduction the author presents a two-page hortatory text in the dialect titled “Poštúj mater(no rejč)” ‘Respect your mother (tongue)’ (v–vi)—and he gets extra points from this reviewer for invoking mother-guilt, always an effective motivator.

The design and layout of *PKMS* exudes practicality. Its cover and pages are plain but legible, without artistic pretense. Each page is arranged in a grid with three columns, from left to right: *RVS* (based primarily, but not exclusively, on the speech of the author’s native village of Gorenji Sinik/Gornji Senik/Felsőszölnök¹)—Slovene—Hungarian. Headwords are

¹ Unfortunately, this means that the village-to-village micro-variation, such as that reported by Vratuša, is not captured. This can of course be overlooked, given that the dictionary does not set out to collect dialectal variation within Prekmurje Slovene.

given in boldface and supplied with editorial accents, acute for long and grave for short stress, followed by basic inflectional data. Many of the entries also include examples of usage; the entry for the headword *stéti* ‘to want’ (346) is reproduced below with English glosses added:

stéti škén [‘to want’] Škéš títi? [‘Do you want to go?’] Kâ je stó? [‘What did he want?’] Zâka je nêj stèjla príti? [‘Why didn’t she want to come?’] Stó je cèjlo bogástvo za sé. [‘He wanted the whole fortune for himself.’] Ídi domâu!– Čé mo stó! [‘Go home!’ – ‘If I want to!’]	<i>hoteti</i> <i>Hočeš iti?</i> <i>Kaj je hotel?</i> <i>Zakaj ni hotela priti?</i> <i>Hotel je vse premoženje zase.</i> <i>Pojdi domov! – Ko bom hotel!</i>	akar Akarsz menni? Mit akart? (férfi) Miért nem akart eljönni? (nő) A vagyont magának akarta. Menj haza! – Majd ha akarok!
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PKMS deals admirably with the difficulties of representing the sound system of RVS. In addition to sharing most of the phonemic inventory of Slovene, this dialect also contrasts front plain vs. rounded vowels (*i—ü, e—[ö]*) and displays co-variation in the (historically) long vs. short low vowels *a—â*. However, in contradistinction to German and Hungarian, from which this structural innovation originated through contact, RVS has inherited lexically-assigned (i.e., “unpredictable”) stress, which must be indicated in an adequate lexicographic representation. This confluence of structural points inevitably reveals the weakness of the current state of desktop publishing (and Microsoft in particular), which even in the third millennium deals poorly with stacked diacritics. Thus, the nonnative user must know some essential rules of stress for RVS in order to predict stress placement where the stress diacritic could not be placed for typographical reasons. For example, in the entry **dâti** dán ‘to give’ ‘I give’ (49), the infinitive form is short-stressed on the first syllable. This information is recoverable only if one knows that (a) all long-stressed words are already marked for stress placement by an acute or the presence of a diphthong (which is necessarily stressed), and that (b) short stress never occurs in the final syllable of polysyllabic words. Given that the intended primary user of the dictionary is a native speaker of the dialect, who knows this information intuitively, such a quibble can hardly count against the work. Moreover, the author explicitly claims that he is unconcerned with

precise transcription, but, rather, aims to gather as much lexical material as possible (iii). In light of this, the consistency and relative precision with which the transcription is treated is most laudable.

The dissimilarities between Prekmurje Slovene (henceforth PSI), which includes RVS, and the (essentially) Carniolan-based standard language, which constitute one of the main reasons that the rapprochement between RVS speakers and the standard proceeds *per aspera* (as we say in Kansas), also highlight the reason for which the dialect is worthy of the Slavist's attention. Namely, this is a variety of Slavic that is at once archaic and unique, providing evidence of an older transitional zone between South and the West Slavic, of language contact with German and Hungarian dialects, as well as linguistic individuality (retention of archaisms or local innovations). To illustrate, PSI requires the clitic order 3sg-AUX + NEG + verb/modal adverb, e.g., *S tákšnimi gùnci je nēj trbèj délo méti* (128) 'One needn't have anything to do with such jackasses (lit. oxen)' in contrast to SSI *S takimi voli ni treba imeti opravkov* [sic] (*loc. cit.*), which has innovated by fusing the negative particle to the left of the auxiliary (*ni < *ne je*). In this case PSI is closer to the Czech and Slovak pattern, where the negative particle occurs directly before the verb and after the auxiliary, cf. Czech *to je neřeba* 'this is not necessary'. With regard to language contact, PSI trends towards the SOV word-order typical of Hungarian, as is evident in the contrast between PSI *Vòra* [S] *je ráně pàunàuč* [O] *vòmlátìla* [V] vs. SSI *Ura* [S] *je pravkar odbìla* [V] *polnoč* [O] 'The clock just struck midnight' (404) (*A toronyóra* [S] *épp éjfélt* [O] *üttött* [V]). Or compare this calque from German: *Tâu ne slíšiès* (330) (\approx *Es gehört nicht dazu*) 'This doesn't belong here'. As far as regional individuality goes, PSI *gúçati* is the neutral verb meaning 'speak' (127) (found throughout the Slovene Pannonian dialect, including also Slovenske Gorice, Prekija, and Haloze) and is a shared Proto-Slavic dialect innovation found only in Bulgarian and Central Russian dialects (see Schallert and Greenberg 2007). One might also point to valuable archaisms found in RVS, absent even in closely related Prekmurje local variants to the south. For example, *PKMS* demonstrates the variation between *st-* ~ *šk-* ($< *x\text{st-} \sim *x\text{st}'$) found in *stèti*, *škén* 'to want', 'I want', which elsewhere either appears with a different outcome or is lost (cf. Cankova *štèila* 'she wanted', *ščén* 'I want' [Pável 1909: 85, 146]; Old Literary PSI *štèti*, *štém* [Novak 2006: 740]). Each of these points could be illustrated many times over with material found in *PKMS*.

Because of the treasure-chest of value for Slavic historical linguistics and dialectology that the dictionary represents, *PKMS* makes an important contribution to Slavic linguistics, regardless of whether or not this was the author's intention. The representations of the dialect material are consistent and matters of detail that are implicit can be established easily

enough by consulting published resources on related dialects (in particular, Avgust Pavel's unsurpassed description of the closely related dialect of Cankova, Pável 1909). On this score alone, *PKMS* is a success and a work worthy of emulation. By meeting its primary intention, serving as an intermediary between PSI and the Slovene and Hungarian standard languages, *PKMS* will serve as a tool to help forestall or, one hopes, reverse language death in the Rába Valley. Yet, should PSI succumb to the tsunami of the dominant languages surrounding it, the value of *PKMS* as a repository of cultural and linguistic knowledge will remain.

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